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COUNTRY LIFE

OFFICES:

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(continued).

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COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XL.—No. 1038.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25th, 1916.

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LADY CHELMSFORD.

Vandyke

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE & COUNTRY PURSUITS

OFFICES:—20, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

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NO POLITICS

IT must be obvious to any ordinary understanding that the food question would be settled much more easily if politics could be banished from the discussion of it. Anyone who has closely followed the proceedings of the House of Commons knows that nearly everybody speaks with a political bias. If a new proposal is made, the temptation is for the hardened politician to sit down and consider, not what the value of this proposal is to the country at large, but what effect it will have on the particular "ism" to which he is attached. His rule of logic is in the old phrase that "Orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy your doxy." An idea started in the House of Commons becomes like a hare chased by a mongrel pack of hounds. One dog may be labelled "Free Trade" and another

"Protection," a third "Nationalisation of Land" and another "The Land-taxer." In all probability, the suggestion put forward is itself the offspring of someone wedded to a doctrine or a fad.

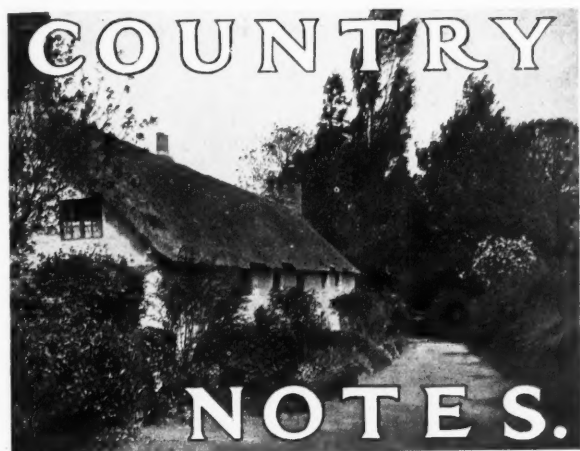
This is all very much to be regretted. We could afford to have mimic battles with the tongue before the war, but fighting, at any rate, is dealing with reality. The soldier when he goes into battle is very well aware that his life is at stake. He will not have time to argue the matter, but will be shot or stabbed with the certainty with which a bad chess-player is checkmated, unless he is able to circumvent his opponent. Politicians have not, indeed, to do with the lives of men. They leave that to the military. But their proceedings intimately concern the wealth, possessions, comfort and future safety of the citizens. We would suggest, then, that it is only right and proper to lay aside partisanship for the time being. There is no reason why the stoutest Conservative should not join with the extreme Socialist in helping to increase the productivity of the soil, and though the speakers in the House of Commons carefully neglected the productivity side of the subject, they cannot escape from the fact that unless there is free production there must be very little to distribute. Yet they all, with one accord, seemed to speak as though the growing of wheat were a very minor thing and the distribution of bread most important. Our own idea would be to reverse the relative positions of these topics and place first and foremost the growing of wheat. This is the time of year in which steps can be taken to ensure comfort in the same period of 1917. Before we are out of the wood it is very possible that compulsion will have to be used in forms scarcely dreamed of yet by the ordinary individual. Much more than the provision of food is at stake. It is very evident that if English cultivators once set about obtaining crops equal or superior to those grown on the Continent they would not idly forget that important stride forward, but would set up a new standard to work from. They have here the soil, the climate, and the facilities for growing any agricultural crop as well as it can be grown anywhere in the world. But it is not to be believed that they will do this through being bribed with a bounty or buttressed by a duty. We are not assuming that these questions are settled for ever. It may be necessary for other reasons to handicap the foreigner as much as possible, but no one connected with farming believes for a moment that any additional stimulus is needed to make the farmer grow as much wheat as he can. Last year men were asking for a fixed price of 45s. a quarter. When they come home from market with 75s. or 80s. in their pockets it is pretty evident that they are not in a mood to think much of the security that comes from a fixed price. Our Parliamentary Correspondent in the very observant article he contributes to this number points out that the need of an artificial stimulant was not at all expressed from the farming side, but was run for all that it is worth, and more than it is worth, by the politicians. Until the politician is got rid of and the question discussed with the sense only of the realities lying round it, it will be difficult to make any real progress.

At the present moment very serious difficulties lie before Great Britain, as they lie before every nation engaged in this calamitous war. Those who have the governance of the country in their hands ought to show the example of clearing their minds altogether from political bias and party ambition. There will be time enough after the war is over to revive the old controversies, if they are deemed worth reviving, but the action of the present hour should be suited to the needs of the present hour, and Great Britain will need all the patriotism of her citizens to see this thing through. That is no small saying, for, in spite of the faults that can be found, those who stand outside the Empire and look on dispassionately know that there is no people so devotedly attached to its Fatherland as our people.

Our Frontispiece

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Chelmsford, wife of the third Baron Chelmsford and daughter of the first Baron Wimborne.

. It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



PROFESSOR SOMERVILLE'S letter on Poverty Bottom in to-day's issue will be read with very great interest. We ought to explain that it was not written really for publication, but the contents have so much importance at the present moment that we venture to make them public. It is very gratifying to hear that what was written in COUNTRY LIFE has had the effect of directing the attention of owners of downland throughout the country to methods pursued by Professor Somerville in Sussex and that many are adopting the methods by which he has achieved success. This strengthens the belief on which we have consistently acted, that action is the best thing to describe. In literature it is action, action, action that tells, and in life it is the same. No amount of preaching or theorisation seems to move the agricultural public, but if you tell a body of Englishmen what somebody has actually done, in other words, if you describe an action and its results, you are doing your preaching with effect.

IT is probable that cultivators on the chalk downs will be considerably astonished at the results which Professor Somerville has achieved with his mangolds. A crop of 45 tons to the acre would be considered good on any land, but on that which has been described as Poverty Bottom from time immemorial it is super-excellent: and Professor Somerville took no unusual means to achieve this end, at least, no means that are not within the capacity of any ordinary farmer. He manured the land first with 12 tons of farmyard manure spread on the stubble, to this he added 5cwt. per acre of basic slag in February and 1cwt. of sulphate of ammonia and 2cwt. of salt at the time of sowing. But it is important to notice that the farmyard manure owed its richness to the basic slag that had been used on the downs. It was made by fattening steers, and these steers got a certain amount of cake, but their rations consisted chiefly of roots, straw and meadow hay. We cannot put the point better than Professor Somerville does himself when he says, "the hay had been grown with slag and was full of clover, so that nitrogen gathered from the air on the grass land found its way to the mangolds through the undigested food residues and the liquid excreta."

IN spite of the scarcity of labour and the need of providing substitutes for the man-power required in the Army, the Government shilly-shally about the use of German prisoners and, practically speaking, nothing whatever has been done. We hear of the reluctance of farmers to employ these men, and various other rumours to account for the delay, but all this shows that Whitehall is being beaten by a difficulty that other Governments have easily solved. The explanation is probably connected with red tape. It was the salvation of the French that at an early moment of these critical times they flung red tape to the wind and to a large extent abolished the formalities and conventions that grow up in Government offices. Our people have evolved a type of permanent official who is extremely able and intelligent in his way, but who works by set rules and does not recognise that even a Government servant needs a certain amount of tact to carry him through.

WHAT we mean will be made more apparent by a re-perusal of the exceptionally good article published in last week's paper on the Employment of German Prisoners in France. It was written by M. André Aron, who has taken a prominent part in organising this work. It showed that at first the

French agriculturists had the same reluctance to take the hated Boche into their employment that is felt in this country. But the French authorities are not easily beaten. They nursed the idea, they coaxed their countrymen and threw out inducements for them to try to get work out of the German prisoners, and the results were most satisfactory. Instead of those captives (against whom individually neither Frenchman nor Englishman has any quarrel, as they are but pawns in the diabolical game played by the Kaiser) eating their heads off in armed camps, they have been set to work on the fair fields of France and have welcomed the change. They are much happier assisting the French peasant-women in their laborious task of making the earth produce food for man and beast than they would be pining in idleness.

A NOT dissimilar state of things prevails in Germany.

In Tuesday's issue of the *Times* Mr. Curtin gives a very interesting description of the work being done on German farms by English prisoners of war. At first, attempts were made to make them do munition and other war work, but this led to rebellion; whereas they do their agricultural labour quite cheerfully. Their position is not enviable. Whereas we in our lavish way are proposing to pay German prisoners at the rate of 25s. a week, English prisoners in Germany receive about 7d. a day and food to which they have not been accustomed. "I often tasted the dinner," says Mr. Curtin, "and I cannot say that I liked it. Nor did the men." Even so, the position of the men at work is more desirable than it would be in an armed camp, where inaction leads very often to brooding and consequent mental trouble. At any rate, the results achieved are such as to show that there must be a screw loose somewhere in our system of Government if it is found impossible to make use of the labour placed in our hands. Let us hope that a decision will be arrived at soon. There is already occasion enough to regret wasted time and lost opportunities.

MY WISH.

A little house to shelter me
And keep me from the cold!
And may it be by Pevensey
Upon the Sussex wold.

In every room as many books
As I shall ever need,
And a sweet garden where the rooks
Refuse to let me read! . . .

For reading out of doors it is
A sinful thing, think I,
With bees amongst the clematis
Beneath a burning sky.

With water lilies in the stream
And song-birds everywhere—
'Tis better far to lie and dream
Or else to sit and stare. . . .

A little house to comfort me
When I am grey and old!
And may it be by Pevensey
Upon the Sussex wold.

BERYL CARTER.

IT is good to see that the right hand of Mr. Jesse Collings has not lost its cunning. The veteran who, in days that seem far distant now, raised the cry of "three acres and a cow" writes about the food control with great vigour in the *Times* of November 21st. The essence of his message is that, though food saving is very admirable, food producing is the real key to the problem. He contends that if another 10,000 acres were put under the plough "the value of the food produced each year would probably be more than the amount saved by the Government's proposals." One other sentence we would quote without comment: "If at the outbreak of the war the Government had begun to cultivate the immense areas of waste and poor grasslands, we should, by this time, have gone a long way towards being a self-feeding nation."

IT has been characteristic of the people of Great Britain during this war that they have always met the Government half way in any measure designed to increase the strength and efficiency of the Empire. It will be remembered how the announcement of heavy taxation was received with

a smile of welcome. So has been the proposal to regulate the consumption of food. Nobody knows exactly how it is to be done, except perhaps in the matter of bread—and a notice to the millers that there is to be no more perfectly white flour will do the trick. But a thousand other difficulties arise. The man who lives in the country, for instance, is in a very different position from the dweller in town. To a large extent he could live on the produce of his own land and garden. He has fruit and vegetables to any extent he may choose. If he has chickens and can manage them well, eggs are at his disposal. In fact, circumstances under which he would feel a real pinch of hunger are inconceivable, that is assuming, as we must assume, that he has some land at his disposal. The regulation of food, therefore, would affect him less than it does the citizen. He may find it inconvenient to have to put up with a little dole of sugar, but if the sale of meat is prohibited except in stated quantities, there is always a something in the farmyard or the field that can be used as a substitute for mutton or beef.

ON the town industrial classes rules like these fall most severely. A great number of them have to buy everything they eat down to the smallest scrap of cabbage, and there are no resources behind. We speak of the dweller in the suburbs where the head of the family sits at a desk or waits in a shop all day and travels backward and forward with a season ticket. In very many cases you could almost cover the scrap of lawn in front of the house with a pocket handkerchief, and at the back there is no room for growing anything except samples of vegetables and salads. This is the consumer whose food would come most readily under regulation, because it has all to be carried from the shop.

IT is very evident that the article on the Danish farm on the Berkshire downs in last week's issue has caused a searching of heart among owners of English land. They deem it incredible that soil which is considered worth only about £20 in this country should be worth £80 in Denmark, and that the purchaser should claim not only that it was cheaper, but that it was more fertile and more convenient to the markets for which the Danes work, namely, London. In truth, this is by no means a state of things that reflects credit on the British agriculturist. There must be a screw loose somewhere. With the markets at his elbow, the British farmer ought to have been in a position to defy competition. Only he has made very little progress in the cereal growing side of his craft and has been content to succeed with stock. Even there he has not mastered the art of keeping a very large number on a small amount of arable land, although that this can be done is manifest not only from foreign example, but from the success of some of our own men who have set their minds on doing it.

MR. WEST, whose Midland farm was awarded the first prize for mangolds by the Sulphate of Ammonia Association this year, farms 115 acres, and on it he manages to maintain no fewer than eighty-five head of horn and eleven horses. This amount of stock is a very large one for the acreage, or would be considered so in this country, but Mr. West is a very successful farmer. The curious thing is that he took to the business when he was of mature years and for purposes of health. He has achieved success by the use of common sense and intelligence. His prize mangolds weighed 90 tons to the acre, and as some doubt was expressed about the accuracy, these were reweighed by a thoroughly competent and impartial authority. What this means in the way of carefulness, exactitude and intelligence in cultivation will be evident to all who give it a thought.

BY the by, 90 tons an acre, although a huge production, is not a record for mangolds. It was beaten in Belgium on a sewage farm, where the farmer got up to 100 tons an acre, and there is a still higher record in this country, a farmer near Bristol having grown 118 tons to the acre also on a sewage farm. This is not exactly husbandry in the proper sense of the word, but a very lavish use of manure. One of the men famous for growing mangolds told the present writer that all the secret was putting plenty of manure beneath the plants. If that were the case they could not be crowded too closely together. Mr. West's large quantity of stock enables him to make a liberal use of farmyard manure. The land on which he grew this extraordinary crop received 25 tons of farmyard manure per acre and 4cwt. of superphosphates, with 3cwt. of sulphate of ammonia in addition. The last mentioned was put on 1½cwt. when sown and

1½cwt. in July. This, of course, is very heavy manuring, but then a record crop of mangolds stands in the same relation to an ordinary one as a prize Shire does to an ordinary good cart-horse. You spend more upon the Shire than is necessary to produce a good working animal. Instead he brings renown to the stud to which he belongs and a certain amount of prize-money, while he will sell at a good price as a fancy animal. But the moral to be drawn by the farmer is not that he should attempt to grow 90 tons of mangolds per acre, but that he should increase the crop of 18 tons to 25 tons with which he is contented to about 45 tons. Were he to do that the value of English land would spring up fast enough.

OUR congratulations are heartily offered to the gallant Serbs who with the French have recaptured Monastir. By one of those curious coincidences which history produces now and then, they did so on the fourth anniversary of the day on which they took it from the Turkish Western Army four years ago. It was the crowning event of a very successful campaign. The Serbs began by winning a fine victory near Ostrovo on September 7th; less than a fortnight later French troops captured Florina, then the Bulgarians were defeated by the Serbs again, who on October 17th crossed the Teherna River. During November, French and Serbs together have fought with ceaseless activity. The Bulgarians had to give up Monastir and probably nourish very little hope of recovering it. They and the Germans apparently are not getting on well together, for the German prisoners assert that the Bulgarians attack or retreat just as they please without paying the slightest attention to working in harmony with the Germans.

FREEDOM.

The Spring leaves, newly on the trees,
Are shuffling softly in the breeze;
They are like cheerful lads and lasses
At school, attentive in the classes.

And when Midsummer breaks in storm
Like children, restless on their form
Tumultuous they strain and sigh
To join that grand world hurrying by.

Then, when November sounds his blast
The captives, freed from school at last
Helpless, through muddy roads are whirled.
Can this be life? is this the world?

UNDI WOLFE.

HOW very contradictory are some of the items of news which we receive from Belgium! In a communication we had this morning there is an appeal for a Brussels charity which has for frontispiece a reproduction from a photograph of an obviously starving woman and child. On the other hand, a Belgian paper published in London has a paragraph saying that in October there was held a rural exhibition which included models of farmhouses and cottages, flowers and other means of beautifying rural life. There were also on exhibition a number of plans for large and small holdings, including the estimates for their cultivation. An agricultural expert lectured on the practical organisation of the farm. He described how it should be arranged for hygiene, efficiency and economy. Several other lectures were given on the means of beautifying the farm. The meaning of all this we take to be is that the Belgians who remain in the country are now reaping the benefit of war prices, while those in the towns are suffering severely from the check to industrial production which has resulted from the German occupation. Land is indestructible; but who will ever replace the mills, factories and other great industrial buildings which the cannon have laid low?

IN a recent number of *L'Indépendance Belge* it is suggested that a great many of our acorns are lost, and that by gathering them substantial food for pigs, sheep, etc., might be provided. The Germans in Belgium, according to the *Amsterdam Telegraaf*, are paying forty centimes a kilo for acorns. They use them for grinding into a kind of meal out of which bread is made and also as a bad substitute for coffee. In this country a certain amount of acorns is gathered every year, principally for the use of pigs. This year, however, someone has discovered that by grinding them it is possible to make a very sustaining food for chickens, and a considerable number has been gathered for this purpose; but the year has been the reverse of favourable for acorns.

THE IMMEDIATE BUSINESS OF AGRICULTURE

BELOW will be found from the pen of a Parliamentary Correspondent an account of the very weak and ineffective agricultural debate in the House of Commons last week. It shows that there never was a previous time in which agriculture was so very ill represented. Neither Minister nor private member had anything to say that was worth remembering.

Yet the problem concerning agriculture is one of supreme difficulty. It is no news that every available man is wanted at the front, and short as the labour on a farm is, no true lover of his country is going to seek for further exemptions. Now, is it desirable to cry over spilt milk of any kind? To say that more potatoes ought to have been planted in the spring of this year and that more ploughing should have been done in the autumn is to waste one's breath. The pertinent question is what can be done at the present moment. It is most desirable—we might even almost say vitally necessary—that the yield of food next year should be very much greater than it has been this autumn, and we believe that if the proper measures are taken, not only could this result be achieved, but at the same time a great and much needed lift given to husbandry in this country. To put it mildly, there has been extremely little progress made during the last thirty years in the production of human food. The energy and ability of the English agricultural mind has been mostly devoted to the raising of stock, so that Danes and Belgians have got ahead of us in a craft where Britain at one time was supreme. To say "Kismet" and sit down helplessly before this state of things would not be in accordance with the bulldog character of Englishmen. Yet agriculture cannot be rushed. When it was found that our munitions of war were absolutely too small to enable us to hold our own with our enemies, Mr. Lloyd George brought his energy to bear on the subject. He and those working with him created new arsenals and concentrated labour, skilled and unskilled, on the turning out of shells and whatever our armies required, with results that are known. But the farmer differs greatly from the manufacturer, inasmuch as he is not only dependent on labour and so forth, but is also at the mercy of the weather. He cannot perform operations on the land according to a time table. The more expert he is the more likely is he at times to show his faith in a masterly inactivity, and that is perfectly right if he is vigilant and keen to see his opportunities when they come. What is chiefly wanted at the moment is that more ploughing should be done. It has not only been rendered difficult by the scarcity of labour, but by the sodden state of the ground. On very light land cultivation may have gone on satisfactorily; but on heavy land where it has been attempted, horses and men alike have been tired to death with dragging their feet through the clay, and wheat in many instances was sown in a puddle. Where that has occurred, it is possible that some sort of crop may be obtained by nursing and care. In the majority of cases the crop is bound to be very poor indeed. A judicious top-dressing with powdered lime or soot may help to rectify the condition of the soil, which in the land we refer to is like putty one day and hard brick the next. Probably most of the stubbles have in one way or another got ploughed, and unless the weather becomes miraculously dry between now and the middle of December it will be better to wait and sow a spring crop. British farmers nowadays dislike spring wheat, and for very good reasons. Experience has shown them that wheat sowing in autumn, and early autumn at that, giving the plant a longer period of growth, is by far the better husbandry, leading as it does to greater abundance in the harvest and to cleaner land. But autumn sowing has to a large extent been missed this year, and the time for it has slipped away.

Ascertain the Facts.

The first thing to be done is to find out exactly how the facts stand. The Board of Agriculture has collected the figures for last year, and these give us a standard at which to aim. In England and Wales in 1915 over 2,000,000 acres were devoted to wheat. In the return an area of wheatland in each county is given. But, of course, there are no figures to show what is actually sown this year. The process, in fact, is still going on. Now, a class of official is in existence which might be very well utilised for the purpose

of recording from time to time what progress is being made in wheat sowing and how the area in 1916 compares with that of 1915.

The Agricultural Organiser.

Roughly speaking, there is one agricultural organiser for each county in England and Wales. This organiser is, generally speaking, a specially educated and knowledgeable agriculturist. His business at the present moment is to lecture and demonstrate to the farmers and, generally speaking, to promote good husbandry. The task we propose to set him would fall in very well with his other duties. It is that he should keep an eye on the farmland of his county and be able at any time to say how far the progress of sowing was satisfactory.

A County Scheme.

Obviously, this work must be done locally. It is impossible for the Board of Agriculture to overlook the cultivation of the whole country. Besides, the County Councils without exception contain members who understand the conditions governing the husbandry in their own locality, and local conditions govern operations to a greater extent than is realised by those not actually engaged in tilling the soil. The County Council, then, should appoint a committee that will be responsible to the Board of Agriculture for showing an increase of food production in the county in question.

Gentle But Firm Compulsion.

It will be for the committee to enquire into the cause of any deficiency that may be pointed out in a particular farm. Naturally, being personally interested in the soil they will be very sympathetic with the farmer, who in nine cases out of ten has a hard task before him. But the result has got to be obtained somehow. We do not think the country is at all in agreement with Mr. Runciman when he places his trust in imported foodstuffs. What is universally desired is that this country should produce as much of its food as the land will yield.

What Are the Farmer's Difficulties?

The farmer may be hampered

(A) *By Unfavourable Weather.*—In that case the agricultural organiser ought to be able to give him advice as to the most he can do under the circumstances. It has always to be remembered that if one crop does not succeed, another may.

(B) *By Shortage of Labour.*—The one idea of a great many people is that of securing exemptions for their men. But the country cannot afford much more of that. We are fighting for national existence, and there seems to be no doubt on the part of the military authorities that the only way to hasten the conclusion of the war is to increase the supply of men. That is the military answer. Politicians must decide about the methods to be pursued. We would say to them in the words of a well known legend, "If you know of a better 'ole, go to it." Of course, every intelligent man in the world would prefer to see plenty of able-bodied men working in the field, and agriculture has contributed on a large and generous scale to the Army; but, still, if more of the workers are wanted, substitutes for them must be found. What, then, are the possible substitutes? As far as our knowledge goes, every elderly and old man in the villages has already resumed his work on the fields. The children, as soon as they become old enough to help, have to go out also. There is still a reservoir of women and, unfortunately, a number of farmers who in spite of everything resent the idea of employing any women who have not been brought up to outdoor labour. We think this may be got over, however. It is a good omen that at least one country gentleman has had the courage to form a hostelry where women are taught the use of machinery, motor-ploughing and the like. On the Continent a horse-plough has come largely into use of recent years behind which the driver may sit, so that the difficulty of ploughing could be got over easily enough. Besides, there are men enough over the military age who could at a pinch do most of the ploughing that is necessary if the women were to perform the other duties of the farm. The next substitute

for shortage of labour is the employment of more machinery. The motor-plough and the tractor are proving of very great service, but they cannot be supplied quick enough to affect the return of the present year. So many of our houses that manufacture them are engaged in munitions that he who at the present moment orders a motor-plough or any other bit of agricultural machinery has a long time to wait till his turn comes. The general practice, as far as we have ascertained it, is similar to that in France and other parts of the Continent; that is to say, in very few cases does the farmer buy a plough for his own exclusive use. Usually, a man of some enterprise who has a small holding of his own buys a number and hires them out. This, in the opinion of farmers we have consulted, is more satisfactory than any co-operative holding of machinery. These expensive machines are continually being damaged in one way or another, and the owner is very seldom satisfied when he lends his machine and gets it back damaged. Probably the man who had it says it was done before it came to his farm, and the owner says the opposite; whereas the shrewd individual who makes his living by hiring out such equipment as a rule takes very good care of his own interests.

(c) *By Want of Knowledge.*—Where a farmer is willing, it should be no blame to him that if he is very young or has just taken to farming, or from some other reason he does not know what he is about. But at a time when the country needs all the grain that can be produced, he must either act on the advice given him or temporarily, at least, surrender his position of command. It would be perfectly fair for the Government, acting through the county committee, to say that such and such an expenditure should be made either for manure or for cultivation, and if the subject of this exhortation was not convinced that the crop would be made more profitable by it, then he must be guaranteed against loss by the State. But in that case fertilisation of the soil would have to be done on the highest scientific principles, consistent always with securing remunerative returns. It might in a few cases be necessary to cultivate the ground for a man who was stubborn and recalcitrant. At a juncture like this the country cannot afford to stickle at a wise use of compulsion. It would be needed in very

few cases, and we feel positive that it would stimulate and improve British agriculture.

(d) *By the Failure of Seeds.*—Over the whole of the country, we are informed by Dr. Russell of Rothamsted, there has been a failure of seeds this year, and this is certainly true of the land within the purview of the present writer. Now, it would be a great mistake to follow the old-fashioned practice of trying to tinker up these clovers by a fresh sowing. Dr. Russell holds very strongly, and we agree with him, that the best course is to plough in the grass and sow the land with wheat. On the fields in question there is a considerable growth of herbage of one sort and another, and where this exists ploughing cannot damage the soil as it does on the stubble; while the plants that are ploughed in form a useful green manure and supply the humus which tends to keep the soil friable and therefore fertile. In this way an area of land excellently suited to the purpose should be utilised for growing wheat.

Conclusion.

If, when all is said and done, the wheat sown falls short of what it should be, there is still another alternative. We do not think that if the course were taken which is now being advised, there would be any shortage as compared with last year's crop. In fact, there might be an increase. But at any rate the farmer should not altogether disdain the prospect of a spring sowing of wheat. A good spring crop is better than a bad autumn one.

Of course, we know very well about his fear of the weeds and his other causes of dislike of spring-sown wheat, but it is a case of making the best of a bad bargain. At any rate, it will not be forgotten that the second food crop in importance to wheat is the potato, and the farmer will do well to begin sprouting his potatoes at once and ploughing and preparing the soil to receive them as soon as the land has been reduced to a suitable tilth, for tilth is ninety-nine points in successful potato growing. Plenty of farmyard manure and as much potash as can be afforded will do the rest. The State ought to go in and ensure the sale of all the potatoes grown by either taking over a proportion for use in munition work or allowing spirit to be distilled from them.





AGRICULTURE IN PARLIAMENT

FROM A PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

IT is much to be regretted that what may be described as the sensational feature of the recent debate on Food Prices in the House of Commons, viz., the announcement of the Government's intention to appoint a Food Controller or Dictator, should have so completely monopolised public attention. For there were other features of that debate of first-rate importance and interest to all agriculturists. The motion before the House declared it to be "the duty of the Government to adopt further methods of organisation to increase and conserve the national food supply," and the Government were entreated—the word is not too strong—to declare their policy with regard to the home production of foodstuffs. The answer was far from satisfactory. For the only agricultural policy of the Government is one of "exhortation." Mr. Runciman said that "what was done to encourage the planting of wheat was done mainly by way of exhortation by the Board of Agriculture"; and he added that "British farmers, on the whole, had responded to the invitation in so far as their labour would permit." The President of the Board of Trade did not elaborate that theme, and it is well known that he looks askance at any proposals for the stimulation of home production which involve a State guarantee to farmers. He professes to be satisfied with the existing state of things, and will continue to depend upon "exhortation" until he is absolutely driven to take other and more drastic steps, as he has been in respect of consumption.

Mr. Acland, apparently, takes much the same view. Speaking in his official capacity for the Board of Agriculture, he said: "I think it a disservice to the farmer to suggest that if he were guaranteed this or that price for this year, or the next year, or for a few years to come, he would be able to increase greatly his wheat, or any other crops. I believe that he is sowing every grain of wheat that the labour he has got on his farm will allow him to sow without thinking of the price he may be going to get this year, next year or any other time. I do not think he is standing back and waiting and expecting people to come forward to tell him to carry on his business, and I do not think he would welcome anything of that kind. I believe he is working every fine day in a way which, as a class, he has never worked before." This eulogy of the English farmer is thoroughly well deserved—

and it is worth remark also that Mr. Acland warmly denied the charge that farmers had been holding up wheat in order to secure higher prices—but the conclusion that the farmer does not look for any State guarantee and is perfectly content with mere "exhortation" is certainly not borne out by the majority of those who speak in his name. Mr. Acland, however, seemed to be tolerably content with the agricultural returns of the year, arguing that though there had been a decrease of wheat acreage compared with last year, the actual crop will be about the same as the average of the ten years from 1905-15. But that by no means satisfies those who demand a living and well considered agricultural policy. The total wheat yield in England and Wales in 1915 was 8,500,000qr., much the largest for many years. Yet in 1846 we grew 22,000,000qr., and we contrived to live through the Napoleonic wars because we were able, as Mr. Hewins reminded the House, to feed 24,000,000 people with home-grown food supplies. The best that the Board of Agriculture had to say for itself was that it had succeeded in persuading the English farmer to make a much greater use of the fertilisers, which have played such a remarkable part in the recent development of German food production. But Mr. Acland was totally unable to answer the charge brought by Mr. Dillon, for example, with respect to Ireland that the Government had done nothing to stimulate food production in a country which is ideally suited for the purpose.

Sir Alfred Mond was perhaps the most sarcastic and scornful in his comments, and he said that while the Government had been spending millions in the provision of munitions they had not spent a £10 note to increase food production. Why, he asked, had no agricultural survey been made? Why had there not been any allotment of the various areas to the supply of different foodstuffs even on the farms belonging to the Crown? No steps had been taken to insist on an increased sowing of potatoes, and 871,000 acres in the United Kingdom had been under barley for the purposes of brewing alone. If the Government had given the farmers the 45s. guarantee which was suggested by the Report of Lord Milner's Committee, it would not have cost the country a penny, and he believed it would have largely increased the acreage under wheat. Such a guarantee, Mr. Denniss urged, would now have to be at least

50s., yet the Government could give it with perfect safety, for there is scarcely a chance of wheat falling below that figure for many years to come.

Again, the Government were strongly criticised for their unwillingness to make use on the land of the labour of the thousands of German prisoners now in this country. Mr. Acland threw the blame of this on the War Office, which insists on allowing prisoners only to be used in batches far too big for the size of the farms. The plain man finds the Government's attitude incomprehensible. On all hands the shortage of labour on the farms is being loudly bemoaned, yet here is a large labour supply left untapped, partly through the obstinacy of the War Office and partly for fear of Labour susceptibilities as to the rate of wages which should be paid for their work. This agricultural labour difficulty naturally played a conspicuous part throughout the debate. It was encouraging to have the assurance of Ministers that at last "a real identity of views" had been established between the War Office and the Board of Agriculture, and that the War Office was now thoroughly convinced that it is not possible under any circumstances to remove skilled horsemen from the farms and expect their places to be taken by women labour or anything of that kind. "I believe," said Mr. Acland, "that farmers can rely upon it that no further men will be taken except after very careful consideration of each individual case, in which the interests of agriculture will be fully considered." It came out clearly during the discussion that some of the military representatives at the tribunals have paid no heed whatever to the indispensable requirements of agriculture. Captain Bathurst told the story of one who had turned on Farmer A before a tribunal and asked him how he dared to say that the man for whose exemption he was appealing

was indispensable when he had lent him to Farmer B. This was the reward the farmer got for pooling his labour in response to the pressing recommendations of the Board of Agriculture! At present the understanding is that the War Office will claim no more men who are *bonâ-fide* employed in agriculture till after January 1st, and none employed on dairy farms till after April 1st. Last week's debate, however, must have convinced all who listened to it that even after these respective dates it will be impossible for agriculture to spare any considerable number of men for the Army if the home production of food-stuffs is to be regarded as an essential of the national well-being in war even more than in peace.

Nor was the vital question of the utilisation of vacant and badly tilled land left untouched. Captain Bathurst had the courage to speak of "large areas of land in this country woefully neglected, growing nettles, thistles and every sort of weed," and he urged that in times like these one was entitled to call on the holders to do their best to produce what the nation wants. Mr. Ellis Griffith referred to the enormous waste of land at the sides of the railways. Mr. Denniss suggested that large gangs of German prisoners could be employed on the reclamation of waste lands, which would be of great advantage to the soldiers on their return. In short, it would have been a most fruitful and practical debate if the Government had been in the mind and mood to take advantage of it. But Mr. Runciman was evidently engrossed with the problems of consumption rather than of production, and the day of a national agricultural policy has not yet dawned. Nevertheless, it is nearer than anyone would have thought possible a few years ago, and perhaps the most hopeful sign of all is that the Chairman of the Labour Party spoke strongly in its favour.



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITH A HEAVY BATTERY ON THE SOMME

[This article, text and illustrations, was prepared by a Canadian gunner while he was recovering from his wounds in an English hospital not far from London.—Ed.]

DARKNESS gradually closes in on the little shell-torn Picardy hills. It has been a burning hot August day with but little wind, and in the dry air still hangs a fine and permeating dust-fog composed of tiny particles from the white chalky ground under foot. For some days this fog has been getting thicker with every fresh shell-burst, and has hindered observation very materially, so that the usual "O. Pip." (observation post) has been useless and we have relied almost entirely on the air service.

We are all tired and dirty—water is too precious here, for the time being, to enable us to wash properly except at intervals of several days—but grateful for the respite from the heat which the night has brought and happy in the fact that the mail has just come in. Up and down the little strip of hillside which is our position the men are lolling outside their dug-outs, chatting and smoking and exchanging news from home. Somewhere below us in the valley there is a quartet party singing:

Down by the farm
Where melons grow . . .

Things are quiet to-night on our particular section, but away on our left in the direction of Contalmaison there is a snarling, continuous grumble of trench mortars, which may be the prelude to a general bombardment. However, the impression seems to be that Fritz is to be allowed to go to bed quietly. To-morrow—there are rumours about to-morrow—a bombardment is to start at 7 a.m.—there is to be no bombardment, but the battery is going to move to a new position—the infantry are "going over" and we support them—all kinds of rumours of the usual kind that spring up nightly.

As I sit smoking a cigarette I hear my name called. An orderly appears. "Say, T—, Captain D— wants you at 5.30 to-morrow to go out to 'O. Pip.' Draw your breakfast and rations to-night."

"What's the idea," I reply, "he knows jolly well we can't see anything."

"Well, I heard him say something about he thought it was going to rain to-night and this infernal dust will be laid if it does. I dunno. . . . Suppose he has some motive. Anyway, you're warned. Got a cig. to spare? Thanks. I'm clean *fini*. De Reszke's, eh? It was sure a good mail to-night, but I got no smokes. Well, I've got to beat it" (move along—Canadianism).

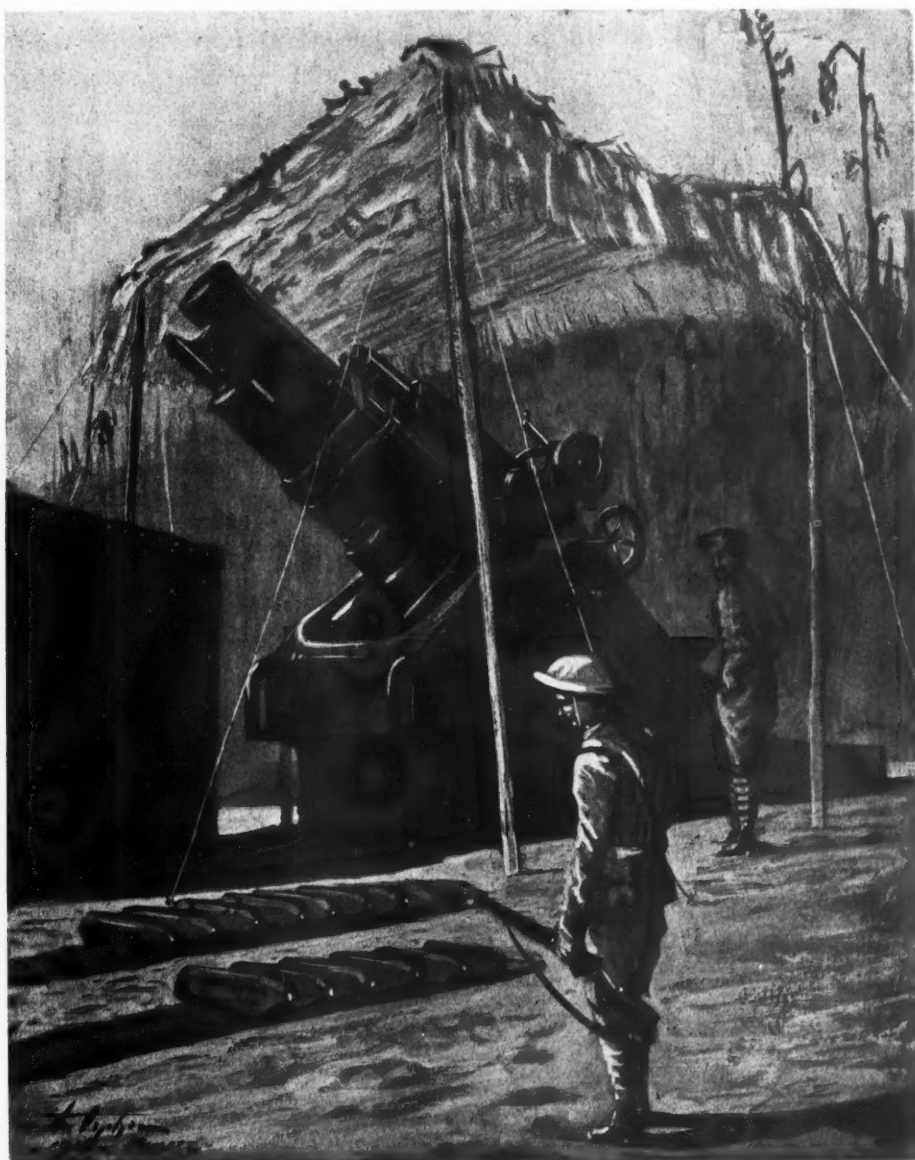
So I go down to interview the cook and find him gone to roost and unwilling to get up. "Oh, come round in the morning, I'll be up at five," he grunts.

Eventually we cool off and decide to roll in. I share an old German "hole" with three others. There is first a little preliminary discussion as to the wind direction and the likelihood of gas; and we all lie down as usual with our

"gasbags" slung round us. In one corner stand a pick and a length of stove-pipe. These are just precautions against suffocation in case Fritz breaks our roof down upon us during the night.

The candle is extinguished and four red glowing dots show where the last cigarette of the day is being smoked. And it is, I think, the one we most enjoy, and dream over.

One by one we drop off to slumber. About midnight we are disturbed by the entrance of a "Jock" M.P. (military police) who is on duty just outside. "Cam' awa', boys, and pit 'em on." We are all awake, instinctively pulling on our masks, for we know the fear of being gassed while asleep underground, which has been the fate of many a poor chap. Outside the dug-out we sit down under the shelter of a steep bank and listen to the sound of Fritz' gas-shells—wheee—oo—thump! But it does not last long; just one of Fritz' little ways of annoying a battery, and soon a breeze springs up and blows the heavy, dank vapour away. We curse Fritz heartily and go back for a few more hours. At five I have to get up and draw my rations from the cook, and on coming forth I find that the rain prophecy has been fulfilled and the dust has abated. The cook has saved some cold tea and with it I fill up my water bottle. Then with a can of bully and half a loaf (which is covered with a kind of beard, reminiscent of the sack in which it arrived) I go to find Captain D—. Presently he appears pushing a



A 9.2 HOWITZER.



THE "JOCK" MILITARY POLICE SENTRY AND A STAR SHELL.
On the post in the middle hangs a shell-case gas gong.



TROOPS BATHING BY MOONLIGHT.

motor cycle with a side-car attached.

"All ready, T—. I want you to make a sketch from the redoubt. Take these binoculars. Did you get any breakfast? Right, get in, and stow my kit with you." I squeeze into the tiny side-car and soon we are bumping over the rough track which joins the road below. The rain has ceased and it is a beautiful, clear, cool morning, with drifting masses of fleecy white clouds in the sky. A few hundred yards and we come to a cross-road. An M.P. is on duty here, standing beside his little funk-hole, and holds up his hand, for all the world as if he were a civil policeman regulating traffic at a London corner. "Can't go that way, sir," he says, in answer to the Captain's wave of the hand. "smash-up in the night and they are shelling it now. Straight on to — and take the road by the church, sir."

So we go straight on between the torn lines of poplars, passing little groups of men here and there cooking and eating, transport wagons, and once a field battery moving up. At one spot they are filling a kite balloon, and its huge bulk on the ground looks like some antediluvian animal. By coming through — we have made a considerable detour out of our way, and the appearance of tents and an ammunition dump, horse lines, etc., shows that shells are not in the habit of falling here. Very shortly we leave the village on our right and swing down a narrow road dotted with a medley of the almost unceasing traffic which is carried on between the fighting lines and the rear. Ammunition wagons, stores, guns, troops "going in" and "coming out," automobiles, pioneers, ambulances, cyclists, prisoners with escorts, cavalry—no wonder the roads are torn up and the road makers' section is always busy.

We pass through the almost obliterated village of — with its lines of splintered and broken elms, its shapeless heaps of bricks and timber that were once peaceful homes, and at "Piccadilly Circus" we come on a little dirty, forlorn band of Boches, prisoners evidently but an hour or so. They are marching along, and most of them seem to be still in some doubt as to their fate, judging from their white faces and the timid glances they throw at their captors. They have not yet been searched. We pass them and turn into a sunk road between high banks scarred with many dug-outs and leave our machine in the excellent shelter of a portion of the bank which has been cut back for the purpose. Slinging on the binoculars and kit, and with my long panoramic

sketch-book in my hand, I climb up the bank after Captain D—. A hill shoulder in front of us cuts us off from the direct view of the enemy, but overhead is the usual exchange of shells. The enemy is giving us a kind of promiscuous, desultory shelling behind the lines, and we are probably searching for his batteries. Overhead a big battleplane drones by and, looking back, I see we have a dozen or more kite balloons slung out in a long line extending many miles. Observation will be good to-day. We pass several batteries and, as nothing much is falling in this particular vicinity, we cut straight across country, not following the communication trenches, till we near the brow of the hill and come into the enemy's direct range of vision. We are stopped by a lieutenant in charge of a field battery, "Better take the trench here; my shells are only just clearing the hill." We take the tip and plod along the narrow winding cutting till the support trenches are reached. Here I am told to wait while the Captain disappears into an officers' dug-out to consult about arrangements for the day. In a few minutes he comes out again and we resume our tramp. All along the trench are untidy festoons of telephone wires apparently without order, but on examination one would find that each has its little tag or mark denoting whence it comes. We reach the "O. Pip"—it is a small recess projecting from a trench, with a strongly protected little dug-out to one side, and on peering cautiously through a loophole in the sand-bag parapet an excellent view is obtained of the valley below. We are not in the very front line, which is on lower ground below us hidden by the contour of the hill, but we have a grand view of the German trenches.

Immediately in front of us is a wood, portions of which have changed hands almost nightly. Fritz is dropping high explosives in it, and great clouds of black smoke rise over our end every few minutes. We can see our stretcher bearers going to and fro among the explosions—calmly and seemingly uncaring for the flying death around them. At intervals there is a succession of rushing, tearing sounds coming with a kind of *crescendo* from behind us, and our shrapnel bursts in a line

near the far end of the wood. I am watching with the fascination that observation work always seems to hold, when Captain D— calls me and details on a map the outline of what is to be included in my panorama. I am to take in a farm on the left—at least it is marked "farm" on the map, though later, looking through the glasses, I find it a flattened-out heap, unrecognisable as a group of buildings.



A VILLAGE AFTER BOMBARDMENT.



AN EMBLEM OF PEACE IN A SHELL-TORN LAND.

That is one of the chief difficulties to be dealt with in the making of military panoramic sketches, to decide definitely what features on the landscape before one are represented on the map in one's hand; especially so in regard to enemy trenches, which are marked in red ink across the map in accordance with data collected by aeroplane observation.

The sketch will take in the wood in front and extend to a village and another wood on the extreme right, altogether about two miles of country are included. As Fritz is for the moment taking no notice of us, after cautiously peering over the "top" I decide I shall be able to dispense with the use of a periscope, and spread out the map against the sandbags, laying my sketch-block on the parapet and taking care that its white surface is not inclined away from me. I work for about an hour, getting all the principal features marked in, when I suddenly become aware of a louder rushing sound than usual, and instinctively drop down behind the parapet. A whistle ending in a crash and a cloud of smoke about thirty yards in front shows where the shell has arrived. Another and another land within half a minute—the third right on the parapet a little distance to my left, sending up a flurry of earth and sandbags. Two men stumble by carrying a stretcher—somebody has

and lands just over the wood between two German trenches. A kind of earth-fountain goes up vertically, and a pall of smoke hides the target for a few seconds. Shell after shell lands from our huge howitzers, two miles away as the crow flies; but I cannot watch the destruction of the German trenches for long. I have orders to get my sketch finished, with all notes and names filled in, in accordance with the map, and return at once to the battery, where I must trace the drawing in ink on linen and get a set of blueprints made. So I work steadily on for about an hour and, having finished the pencil drawing, report to the captain before starting back. This time I must walk, as Captain D—— is staying in the "O. Pip" for twenty-four hours.

I find that there is a more direct way to the battery than the way we followed, by keeping down the trench to the left, and set off at once. It is very muddy after the night's rain, in spite of the dry weather of the past two weeks. Trenches

never seem to really dry up. After about twenty minutes' walking my trench runs into the ruins of — village, which last week was in German hands. It is an indescribable desolation. One wall of the church still stands. The main street has been partially cleared of rubbish and a well has been uncovered, round which a half-dozen men are filling their bottles. Is it fit for drinking? No one knows, but it is water, anyway.

Passing through the village I take the road to —, where we saw the German positions earlier in the day. There is a line of casualties on stretchers along the side of this road waiting for the motor ambulances. This is as near to the trenches as they can approach, and even so their sides are hung with sheets of expanded metal as a protection against shrapnel. Further down the road the carcasses of two splendid horses sprawl ungainly and hideous where a shell has caught a battery on the move. One has its lower jaw blown clean away, and a bullet hole through its shoulder shows that probably its master has mercifully ended its agony. War is cruel to horses.

I reach —, where "whizz-bangs" are arriving too frequently to be healthy. A pioneer company is repairing the road, filling shell-holes with broken bricks from the ruins, dragging away *débris* and digging drains: two "whizz-bangs" fall simultaneously right on the road, marvellously hurting no one, but an officer gives the order to take cover, and the pioneers move off laughing till the shelling abates.

It is now noon, and I begin to feel hungry again, so

after passing the village I choose a nice bank under a fringe of scarlet poppies and fish out my bully and bread. The cold tea is excellent and helps down the salt meat. After a cigarette I start on again, arriving back at the battery in about half an hour. I report to the major, and then return to my dug-out to finish my work. Our guns are giving "battery fire," and little lumps of dirt fall continually from the dug-out roof on to the drawing as a result of the concussions. It is hardly the same as working in a studio. It takes about an hour and a half to get the tracing finished, and then the prints have to be made. This, however, is but the mechanical process of a few seconds as the sun is shining, and I then hang them up to dry. Two of my fellow lodgers arriving with mess-tins of tea and a pot of jam and bread show that tea is "up." I grab my own mess-tin and join my comrades at "afternoon tea." By the time



AN OBSERVATION POST IN A RUINED HOUSE.

"stopped" a piece. Presently they return with their burden, a cheery, muddy individual with the eternal cigarette in his mouth. The trouser leg has been cut away on one side, and a clean white bandage shines in prominent view. "Bye-bye, mates, I'm for Blighty!" He seems to look on his wound in the nature of a blessing.

The enemy suddenly lifts his range for some reason, and his shells pass well over our heads. He must be after the field battery that we passed on our way, whose shrapnel is evidently annoying him in the wood. I take another look over the parapet and Captain D—— comes up beside me with a field telephone in his hand. He glances at his watch and then speaks into the mouthpiece preliminary directions; then "Fire." There is a deeper note in the air as the big, 9.2 shell from my own battery hums up the valley. It is past before the gun report reaches our ears

we have finished the prints are dry, and I take them in to the major's dug-out and, after he has approved them, seize the opportunity to ask for leave for my pal and myself to go down for a swim to the river which runs a few miles behind our position.

We board a motor transport in piratical fashion and get a lift almost as far as the river. Here is quite a respectable village with most of the houses intact, shops and a Y.M.C.A. branch. Troops of all sorts are billeted here, some on "rest," others fresh ready for the trenches. But we feel the need for a bath comes before

all other attractions, and we are soon enjoying the cool, clean water. We put on clean shirts and socks which we have brought with us, and leave our dirty ones to be washed at a peasant's cottage. In the village we buy some tinned fruit, sardines and eggs, and turn into the Y.M.C.A. (situated in some old farm buildings) for a cup of coffee and a glance at the English periodicals, only two weeks old.

Dusk finds us unwillingly plodding back to the position, where we arrive about nine o'clock ready for sleep. The battery has ceased fire and the gun crews have already turned in. Another day is over.

IN THE GARDEN

NEW GARDEN BERBERISES.

IN recent years plant collectors have sent home a great many new species of *Berberis*, notably from China and Tibet. Some of them are of little more than botanical interest, while others are exceedingly beautiful garden plants. In *Berberis Wilsonæ* we have one of the most lovely of them all. It was one of E. H. Wilson's greatest finds in Western China, and it is named in honour of his wife. It is a comparatively low-growing bush from 1ft. to 4ft. in height, the branches of which are wreathed with translucent coral or salmon red berries in autumn. The leaves also assume bright tints in autumn before they fall, for this *Berberis* is deciduous or, at the most, only partially evergreen. It needs only to be seen to be appreciated, for it is one of the choicest gems of the

by virtue of its graceful habit and arching growths furnished with brilliant coral red fruits, at once became the centre of an admiring public, and it received the very high award of a first-class certificate by a unanimous vote. Being unlike any known *Berberis*, it was named *Berberis rubrostilla*. This remarkable shrub occurred as a chance seedling in the society's gardens at Wisley, and was thought to be a seedling of *B. Wilsonæ*; however, its larger pendent fruits have no resemblance to that species. Such is the way in which some of our finest novelties are raised—purely by accident.

Another *Berberis* to receive an equally high award on the same occasion was *B. Sargentiana*, a hardy evergreen species that is sure of a great future by reason of its handsome foliage. The autumn tints are extremely beautiful, the leaves assuming



Reginald A. Malby.

A FRUITING SPRAY OF *BERBERIS WILSONÆ*.

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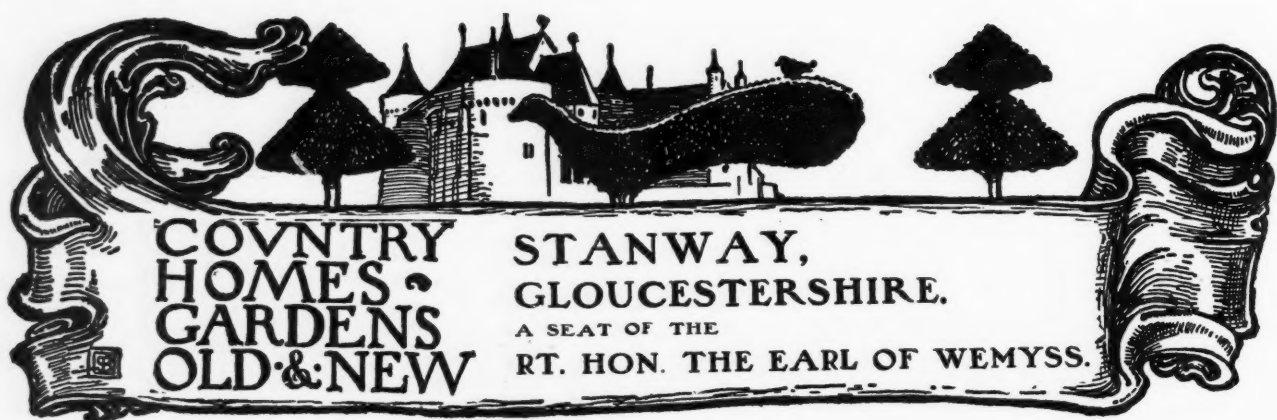
garden in autumn, and it is seen to the best advantage clothing a rocky boulder on the sunny side of a rock garden. Few plants have received such a welcome in recent years, and it is already to be found in many gardens throughout the country. It may be propagated from seeds sown in autumn or spring, the former for preference, as soon as the fruits are ripe. A sandy loam soil seems to suit it admirably.

As it is probable that *B. Wilsonæ* will cross readily with other *Berberises*, the seedlings may show a good deal of variation. This opens the way to a very fascinating pursuit, for one never knows the value of a chance seedling. As an instance of this, a most beautiful seedling *Berberis* was brought up to the Royal Horticultural Society's meeting on November 7th. The seedling,

varying hues of rich, clear red mingled with deep green, bronze and scarlet. Some of the leaves are translucent in the sun, and being evergreen the whole shrub remains brilliant throughout the winter. The rigid stems also assume a ruddy tint, while they are provided with long ivory-coloured spines.

Two other new *Berberises* of which we shall hear more when they are better known are *B. brevipaniculata* and *B. Stapfiana*. The lovely terra-cotta fruits of the former have already been figured in these pages; the latter is a graceful shrub allied to *B. Wilsonæ* but much taller in growth. The growing tips of this plant were damaged by frost in the writer's garden this autumn, but there is every prospect of the plant starting off with renewed vigour in the spring.

C. Q.



AT Stanway there are two features of nearly equal importance and fascination—the beauty of the site and the peculiarly rich and compact grouping of the structures. For, backed by sloping lawns leading up directly to the magnificently timbered upland of the Broadway Cotswold, there stand in free yet firm and inseparable relationship a very beautiful Tudor-Jacobean many-gabled mansion with its elaborate gatehouse and open court, a small Norman church, a remarkable fifteenth century barn, and some half a dozen old stone cottages with pretty gardens. Beyond these rise ancient elms and beeches leading on immediately to a fine park extending on both sides of the road, guiding to almost

the prettiest village in Gloucestershire, Staunton, and lying little more than a mile to the north.

Leland says: "Tracy now dwelleth at Stanway," a sentence implying and signifying a good deal. For at the Dissolution of the Monasteries Richard Tracy, second son of Sir William Tracy of Toddington, an ardent antagonist of the monastic system and a severe amateur in theological polemics, became both an active commissioner and a local ally of the Court of Augmentations, and presently himself the possessor of the manor here with all its appurtenances, a property which had belonged since even Mercian days to the Benedictine Abbey of Tewkesbury some ten miles westward. Hence the origin of both the pre-Tudor church

and barn at Stanway. The original farmhouse or manor-place of the monks, after being lived in probably for some years by him and his wife, Barbara Lucy of Charlecote, had to make way for an Elizabethan mansion of nobler proportions. It had probably merely looked on to the little paved court, still in part preserved, to the rear of the present dwelling, and we may take that to have been a gabled Cotswold house. It was doubtless natural that the very ancient Tracys of Toddington should become the acquirers of so adjacent and convenient a property at such a territorial crisis of our history. Richard had, moreover, inherited, besides a good portion from his father, the friend of Tyndale, strong and peculiar notions as to Religious Reform. Sir William, who died in 1530, had left a will which led to some strange things. For, on examining it carefully the clergy whose attention had been drawn to it declared it to be heretical (*i.e.*, Lutheran), and Archdeacon Parker caused Sir William's body to be exhumed and burned in public. It will readily be surmised that situated as Toddington and Stanway stood, and surrounded by the great Abbeys of Evesham, Tewkesbury, Hayles, Beckford and Winchcombe, a zealot such as Richard Tracy found himself in a perfect hunting-ground, and he was not unmindful of the scandalous outrage which the unreformed Church had done to his father's remains. We accordingly find him informing Thomas Cromwell that Dr. Smythe, a priest, had dared to pray



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1.—LOOKING NORTHWARDS ACROSS THE FORECOURT.

"C.L."



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2.—GATE-HOUSE WITH HALL ORIEL ON LEFT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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3.—ON THE ROOF.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

in the Church of St. Lawrence at Evesham for the abbots of all these same monasteries. As Tracy was at this moment (1538) a Justice of the Peace for the county and a close ally of Latimer, the said abbots and their friends may well have suffered something rather more searching than perturbation. The famous relic at Hayles, a mile off, to which Chaucer alludes in the "Pardoner's Tale":

By Godde's precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blode of Christ that is in Hayles

became handed over to Master Richard Tracy, and by him was sent up to London for the King's Council to view it. And we read in a letter of Latimer's to Cromwell: "I wish there were many like Mr. Tracy," and urging that "he will stimulate the Abbot and Convent of Winchcombe to grant what they can to Mr. Tracy as he is given to good hospitality, and is always ready to serve the King on Commissions, and in other ways." But a little later, in 1542, he is described as Richard Tracy of Stanway. Winchcombe was destined for that arch-spoiler and destroyer Lord

Seymour, last husband of Katherine Parr, at Sudeley, though Church Stanway, which had belonged to Winchcombe, did become Tracy's, for, anon, he presented the Rev. James Beck to that living.

The present house is practically the building commenced by Richard (died 1569) and continued by his son and successor, Sir Paul Tracy, Bart., with the additions of the gate-house by Sir Richard (Fig. 2), his grandson, 1626 (born 1581)—1637. In addition to these buildings there is the fine Corinthian doorway from the garden on the south side (c. 1720) and the great and rather coarse bay window thrown out from the hall at the south-west end of it near the gateway. This

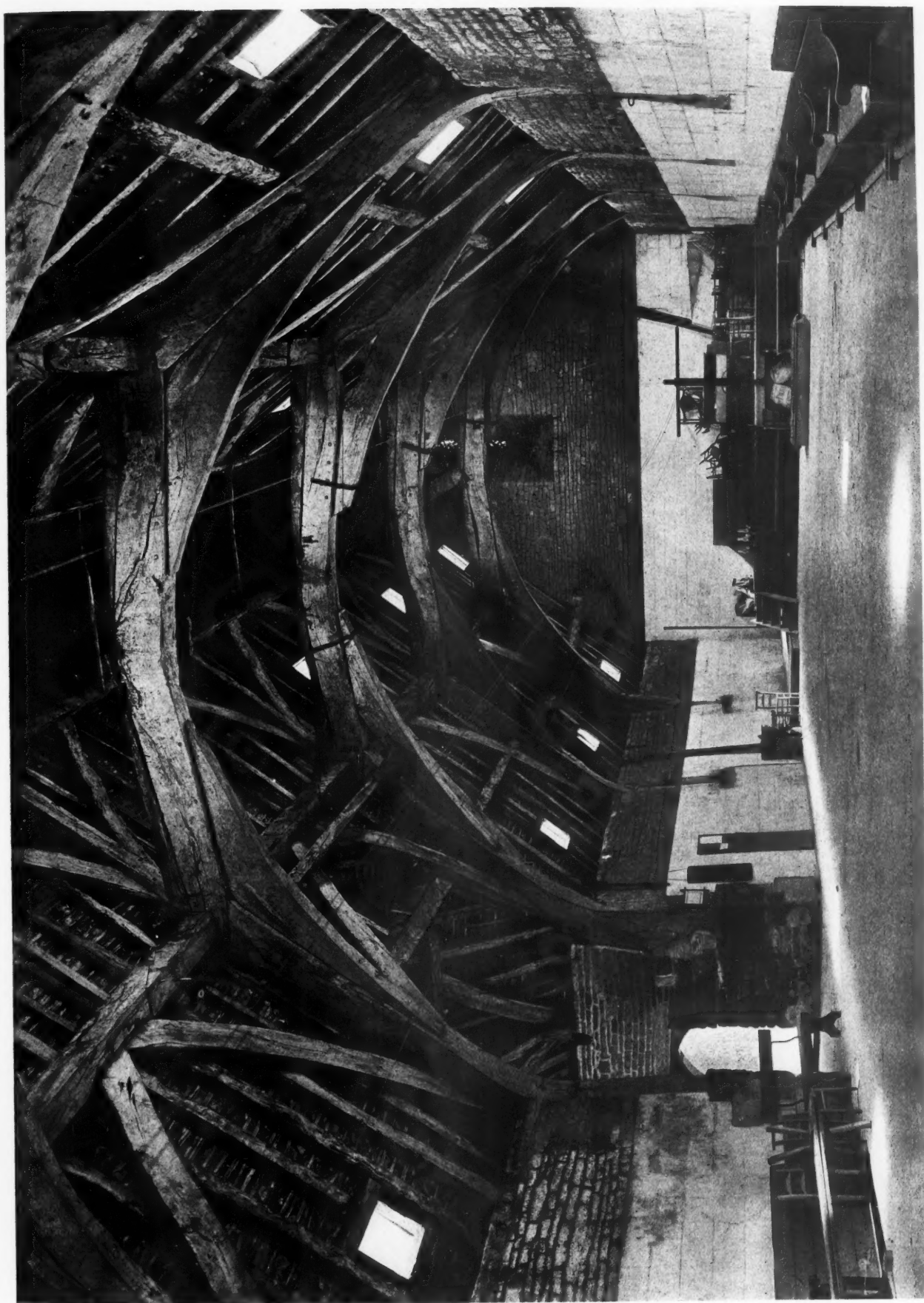
may have been constructed quite late in the seventeenth century. Still later has been cut off from the hall a space in order to make a passage into the house independent of it by means of the classic screen-work shown in Fig. 7. In the hall is also seen a good specimen of shovel-board some 16ft. in length. At about the same period was built the second, or inner, gateway. On all the gates occur scallop ornaments taken from the dexter chief of the Tracy coat. The moulded



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4.—THE GREAT BARN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



5.—WITHIN THE BARN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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6.—THE DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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7.—IN THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

treatment of the hall timbered ceiling is interesting and effective, though it is not what was probably intended originally. Beyond the hall, north, succeeds the library, while from the south-east end of it a few steps lead up to the drawing-room (Fig. 6), decorated in white and having a very beautiful, shallow, geometrical - pendentive ceiling, and it contains many portraits of those who formed connecting links between the Tracys and the present owners. And among these forebears it may be recalled that Sir Robert Atkins, K.B., the Judge, present at the wedding in "ye Church of Lower Swell," witnessed the marriage of his daughter Anne to Sir John Tracy of Stanway, August 7th, 1699, and inserted in the Register "Written by the said Robert Atkins, being in the 79th year of his age, without spectacles." The present possessors, however, descend through the heiress of Anthony Tracy-Keck of Great Tew (Oxon), who married Francis Lord Elcho in 1771, nephew of David, that exiled and most faithful and self-sacrificing victim of the younger Stuart "claimant."

This room is also distinguished by its fair Georgian paneling and broad fluted pilasters framing in the fire-mantel; further, it opens to the garden (south) through the aforesaid Corinthian doorway (Fig. 9) decorated with the shield of Tracy impaling Atkins, evidently the work, therefore, of Sir John above mentioned, whose initials likewise occur on the lead piping. It is pleasant to mention that the recent work carried out here by Messrs. Detmar Blow and Fernand Billerey has been done in a spirit of true reverence. As an older gable shows itself over the portion of the house to the south-east above the rather coarsely crenellated

parapet, it is obvious the latter was a decorative enrichment carried out at a comparatively late period.

The Temple pyramid, or "Folly," looking down on to the house from the terraced garden slope, east (Fig. 10), is a memorial set up in 1750 by Sir Robert Tracy in memory of Sir John, his father, and beside it stands a hundred-handed cedar. It consists of a single square chamber with four round-headed Georgian window-doors, with a full cornice, the "rusticated" angles of which carry four stone fluted urns, thus forming a low tower, or *podium*, from which springs the spire-like pyramid. Below this, and between it and the house, in those days the terrace carried a long tank, or shallow lakelet, from which a Neptune fountain was supplied on the lower ground. In the days when water-tricks were much in vogue, a good deal of the life of the house was no doubt attracted to this feature, which was probably part of the extensive work likewise of Sir John Tracy. After two or three generations, however, the damp resulting from this terraced pool gave rise to objections and it was obliterated. In those days there was also a small oblong pool beyond the court and inner gate. This, too, has passed away.

The following extract affords a characteristic picture of eighteenth century manners and customs (c. 1792-93):

At Stanway House, the residence of Lord Elcho, the New Year was ushered in with a style truly constitutional and loyal. Evening prayers were read in the great Gothic Hall at 3 o'clock by the clergyman of the parish; and at intervals proper psalms and hymns were sung accompanied by the Hon. Misses Charteris, and Miss Hamiltons, in a masterly and scientific manner: the whole concluded with "God save the King," in which the congregation, ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, joined with the truest spirit of loyalty, zeal, and sincere attachment to our beloved and revered Sovereign. Lord Elcho then ordered strong beer, wine, etc., to be served to those present, and the King's health was cordially drunk. What added to the musical performance was (that) the seven young ladies of the choir appeared in elegant white uniform dress, with a neat *coiffure*, ornamented with a berried holly-sprig, and the like also in the bosom in conformity to the season. After a splendid and hospitable dinner the *fête* was concluded with a ball, where the ladies were distinguished no less by their grace and elegance in dancing than they had been admired for their skill and knowledge of music. The concluding Hallelujah which would have done credit to the genius of Handel or Pergolesi was the unsophisticated composition of Miss Susan Hamilton.

The little aisle-less Norman church of St. Peter had in those days undergone a late, and rather too drastic, "restoration," although it remains to-day a very picturesque

specimen, somewhat too directly in front of the main court and the façade of the house to permit of a full fair view of the latter. Its Norman corbel-table, with the usual grotesque heads and pellet moulding under the eaves of the nave, has escaped the spoilers, especially that upon the less weathered, or northern, side; and the western tower is of the thirteenth century below and completed above with fifteenth century battlements, crocketed finials and gargoyles. The south-east edge of the cornice has been described as having traces of herring-bone work, showing that the Norman work here was the work of the



Copyright.

8.—THE HALL ORIEL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

yet un-Normanised local Saxon masons, as in so many Cotswold village churches; but this is an error. The fragment is Norman chevron work. The original Norman west tower would seem to have been burned and was replaced in the days of King John. The great barn standing north-west, a little from the church, deserves to take a higher place even among the greater ones of this county than has hitherto been accorded it (Figs. 4 and 5), for it has escaped the attention of the archaeologists. It has now been carefully transformed into a local assembly room, with concrete floor and a dais at the east end, while the long roof is lighted by two tiers of small square windows, which enable



9.—THE SOUTH DOOR.

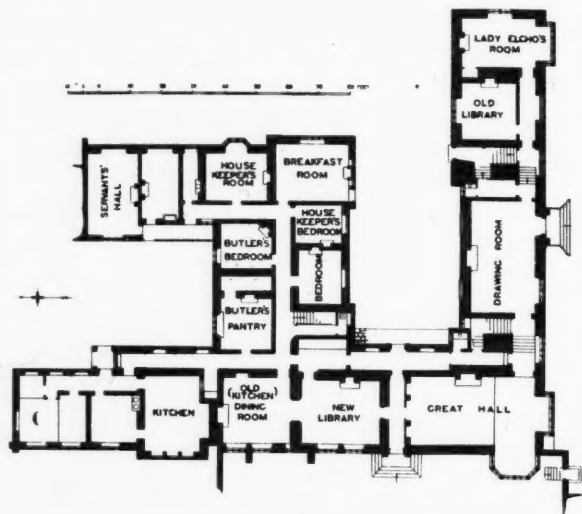
gable. The mighty principals that carry the stone-slatted roof have their curves formed by the natural bend of the timber, splendidly reinforced further up by stout wind-braces to the collars. The gables externally end in stone gablets carrying interesting examples of fourteenth-century finials.

The side door of the thirteenth century in the north transept, by which the barn is to-day entered, is an interesting insertion, perhaps in Tudor days, when it was removed (probably) from the church during alterations. The stones of the southern jamb within still retain plentiful traces of ancient circular gnomons, or amateur sundials. Beyond it, at the west end, occur some beautiful little sunken square gardens, formed entirely of roses, red and white.

There is a tradition that Mr. Robert Dover, prime reorganiser of the old "Cotswold games," the friend of Drayton and Ben Jonson and of the Tracys of Toddington and Stanway, died at Stanway Hall, and was buried in this church in 1641. The registers are imperfect at this period; but inasmuch as among Dover's ardent admirers and friends in 1636 occur the names of Francis Izod of Stanton and John Stratford of Farmcote, both immediate neighbours, and the latter connected by ties of blood with Tracy, probability is favourable to it. At that time Sir Humphrey Tracy reigned at Stanway, who was soon destined to have his loyalty to King Charles severely put to the proof; and then the ancient camps above Stanton and Hayles were to flare afresh with the signals of armed men. The Tracys as a family went heart-whole for the King. Sir Humphrey became

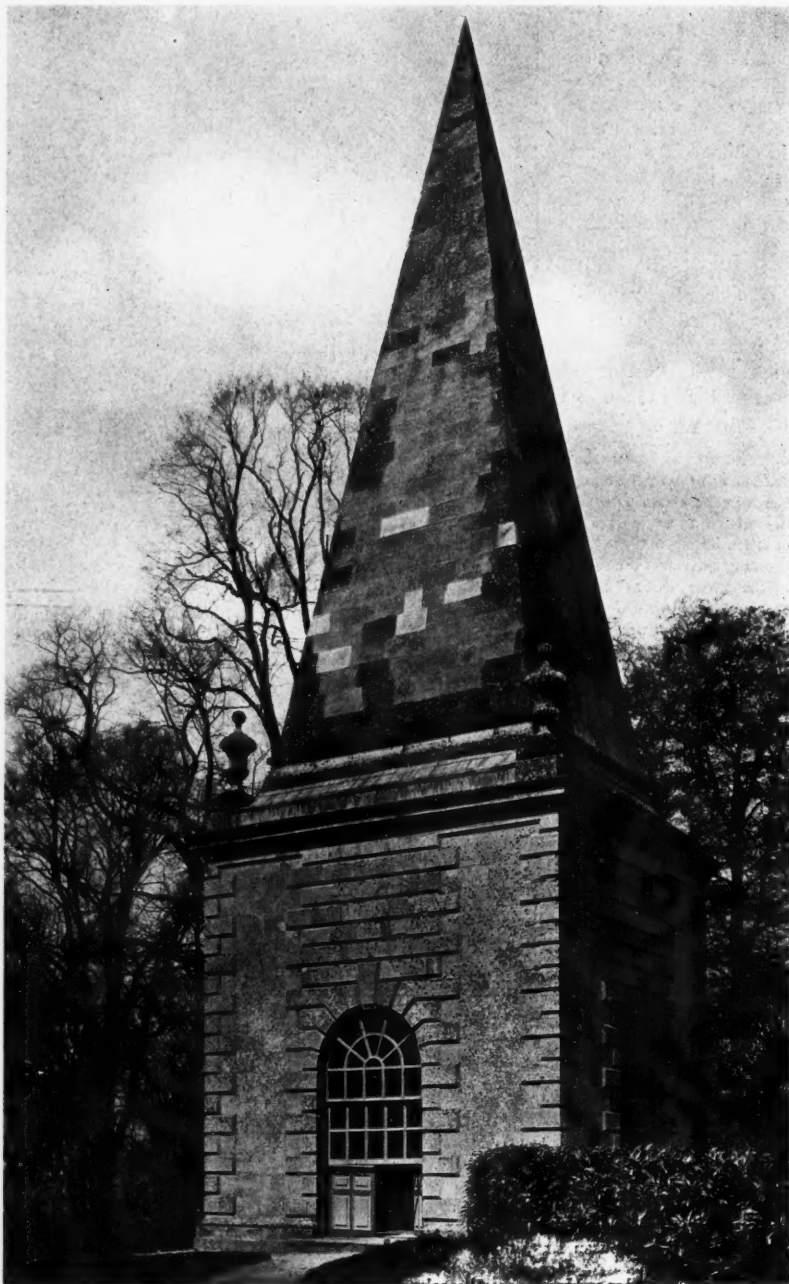
this present view of the fine interior structure to be pictured.

Originally, in addition to the remaining north transept (the only extant entrance), there was probably one on the south side, on the site of the present parish room. It was thus a transeptal barn measuring in length roof, by 32ft., divided by oaken principals into seven bays, and aired by a splayed slit high up in each



PLAN.

a declared delinquent in 1645 and was assessed at £2,000, and was presently ordered to be brought up in custody to pay it. The Parliamentary Commissioners fleeced him of this sum in lumps. Nevertheless, in 1648 we find him again in arms; this time in Kent. In the following year he was



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10.—THE PYRAMID.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

allowed to compound for Stanway and for his other properties; but he was only finally "discharged" on April 2nd, 1652, and died six years later.

These were dark days for this neighbourhood and its various estates. None the less, they were enlivened by a curious new agricultural factor, namely, the growing of tobacco, which, in spite of the remonstrances of the Bristol Virginian merchants and others interested, received very determined local encouragement. It spread to Winchcombe, Gotherington, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, and in spite of orders from Whitehall (1635) to the Tracys and others that the crops should be uprooted, there are fields that were theirs which are still known as Great and Little Tobacco-piece. Moreover, the cultivation continued throughout the

century, sometimes (we are assured by documentary evidence) bringing fortunes, and sometimes (perhaps through over confidence in the climate) causing bankruptcies. It is noteworthy that in 1914 permission was given to grow tobacco once more at neighbouring Toddington.

It would be difficult in England to find any landscape more attractive than this surrounding Stanway on a July morning, with veils of what the Arabs call "woven air and sunshine" poured over the mounded woodlands that here clothe the Cotswolds, out of a pale, almost Italian, sky, and below these, over the fields that are turning gold, and the grassy sides of the roads, where the yellowhammer pipes above faëry-kingdoms of blue crane's-bill and silvery meadowsweet.

ST. CLAIR BADDELEY.

A SOLDIER'S DIVERSION

[The soldier referred to, our readers may like to know, is the same officer who wrote about the golden oriole in our issue of December 18th, 1915.—ED.]

IN a book on hawking a picture of a trained kestrel appears sitting calmly on its owner's wrist and looking questioningly up into his face. About three years ago the writer of these notes first looked at that illustration and mentally compared the bird depicted there with the kestrel that was at the time sitting on a block in his garden. Strangely enough, this hawk in the illustration

seemed to have the same "parrot" sort of look, and was not a bit more like the keen sparrowhawk than his own little speckled eyes in which he had begun to lose confidence. Yet, if this bird could be trained, could be flown loose, and



POSITION OF KESTREL IN THE HAND.

Preparatory to being thrown at the quarry.

afterwards carried safely home, why should Josephine not do likewise? Perhaps the stupid fits of vacancy and disinterestedness, not to mention the disturbing and frequent habit of going "button-eyed," might, after all, be overcome; and she might eventually actually tackle a dead sparrow and not refuse all food except little pieces of meat held temptingly on the outstretched fingertip!

A great deal has happened in those last three years. Josephine (with the aid of Mr. E. B. Michell's book on hawking and others) was successfully trained and flew very long distances to the lure and fist, until one day she took to soaring



THE KESTREL THROWN FROM THE HAND.

and disappeared. Then a second kestrel named Gibbs (after a famous professional falconer) was trained in much shorter time and flew equally well to the lure, would hover prettily and "wait on" a little; still, she never caught a wild sparrow or any other quarry, and this was not surprising, as the books are unable to quote an instance of a kestrel having been trained to take wild birds, and it would indeed have been strange if beginners could succeed where experts had failed. Gibbs once went away down wind, but after seven days she came back as cheerful and tame as ever. She must have subsisted largely on beetles, as her castings were composed almost entirely of beetles' cases.

After that, for a long time, Gibbs was sadly neglected, as two sparrowhawks claimed all the attention and all the best food—as, for instance, when sheep's heart was the diet, Gibbs would have to be content with the "pipes." These



STOOPING AT A SPARROW.

sparrowhawks were duly trained and flown with considerable success. Then came the war and the end of all hawking, except for one short glimpse of it in Belgium, when a sparrowhawk, hot on the heels of a thrush, almost flew into two of us as we crept along a hedge. About six weeks ago a fresh young kestrel was procured, one that could fly passably well and only captured after a stern chase, and it is on account of the fact that the bird has done something out of the ordinary that the present notes have been written.

On the first day this youngster was induced to eat a little raw beef on the fist and was then put in the dark. Since he did not dash about or "bate," he was transferred to a hastily constructed screen-perch, around which noise was always going on and where he quickly settled down. In about a week he would fly across the room to the fist, though he disliked the bare hand, and would generally refuse to start unless it were covered.



IN FULL FLIGHT.

But, as always seems the case with newly taken hawks, he seemed lost when taken into the open air, refusing to touch any food and preferring to hang head downwards from the leash to sitting up on the fist. This nervousness, however, was very quickly overcome by getting him accustomed to the open air, sunlight and strange, moving objects. The day at length arrived when he would fly a couple of feet to the gloved hand, upon which a small morsel was always to be found. Having reached this particular point in the little hawk's training, the rest—as usually is the case—was easy.

The same day he would fly half the length of the lawn to the fist or lure; the following day the distance was increased to the whole length; and at the end of a week he would fly the length of the line (about 50yd.) which was attached to the jesses and to a piece of wood at the other end, the wood preventing him from flying clean away, but not pulling him up with a jerk. Then, on a certain Saturday afternoon when he seemed even keener than usual, his leash and swivel were removed and he was allowed to see the lure being swung at a distance of about 50yd. To our



A FLYING KESTREL.

joy he started quite fast (for a kestrel) and caught it in the air very prettily. He was flown six or seven times more that afternoon, and came quite 200yd. at the last effort. Knowing by experience that hawks are inclined to be "put off" by surroundings, such as thick trees, etc., we took him the following day to a dark beech wood, and with about 50yd. of fishing line attached to his jesses allowed him to fly up into a high bough below which were no bushes or

get a good start, we felt he would have a better chance, and then it was that the idea occurred to us of laying him in the hand (as illustrated on page 637) and throwing him at the quarry as one reads of some Eastern falconers doing with certain hawks.

We immediately tried this with the lure and found that the hawk did not mind the throw in the least, kept his eye on the lure all the time, and it gave him a tremendous



IN HOT PURSUIT OF A SPARROW.

branches in which the line might get caught. As before, he came at once, and this willingness was, no doubt, due to the fact that he had had a considerable amount of carrying, of which, the experts declare, no hawk can have too much. This experiment was repeated until the owner of the wood made his appearance and politely asked us to take the hawk away, as it might tackle the pheasants in the wood! One thing is certain, and that is that after two or three turns at the lure a hawk will not fly until he (or she) has had a rest, and the owner must be content to await the hawk's pleasure until he looks keen again.

We next took our little bird to a disused racecourse which partly ran along the side of a railway line and was naturally fairly open country. Here he would take his stand on the top of a telegraph post and follow us, flying from post to post, and when he saw us getting far away would come flying round and round our heads until the lure was eventually thrown out. All this was very pretty, but it was not *catching birds*, which was our ambition. When he did start after a bird, he would pursue it manfully for some distance, and then, finding it hopeless, would give it up and swing off into a tree or on a post. If only he could

impetus in starting. Having done this several times, we next threw him into a flock of small birds feeding in a cut cornfield. They were rather too far off, and he chanced to single out a chaffinch, which proved too smart on the wing for him. Having seen that he seemed to grasp the idea of what he was intended to do, we waited a good opportunity hoping that the hawk would be successful in catching a bird and, after being allowed to eat it all, would be encour-

aged to perform the same feat again.

And so it proved, for we presently caught sight of a sparrow hopping about in the middle of a thick hedge. One or two beaters were sent round to the back to persuade the bird to come out the side where the hawk was. This it did, when the hawk was thrown out of the palm of the hand



FLYING TO THE LURE.

towards the sparrow and, to our joy, caught it well. He was allowed to enjoy the warm feed at his leisure, and was then carried home and put to bed. The next afternoon we started out again, and by this time the kestrel seemed to thoroughly understand the game. As soon as he was laid in the palm of the hand he began to look about him expectant of some fun, and he generally had it, sometimes catching two and three birds in an afternoon.

LITERATURE

A BOOK OF THE WEEK

The Grand Fleet, by H. C. Ferraby. (Herbert Jenkins.)

MR. FERRABY has performed a national service in writing this book. It ought to be in the hands of every Englishman and Englishwoman, and might with great advantage be introduced as a reading book in schools. Its purpose is not to glorify the history of the deeds of the Navy, but to explain in precise terms what the Grand Fleet is. Very few people outside the Services realise this meaning. To their imagination the Fleet is only a collection of large ships such as they may have seen at manœuvres or read about in the newspapers. The details are unfamiliar to them. It is extremely unlikely that half of the men in a room at any given minute could tell exactly what is the difference between squadrons and flotillas which forms the subject of the first chapter. It would be news to the majority that the Grand Fleet is sub-divided into squadron battleships and cruisers and flotillas of torpedo boat destroyers. "To confuse these terms," to use Mr. Ferraby's own words, "is as wrong as it would be to talk of a gaggle of buffalo and a herd of geese." He goes on to show how the great ships mentioned in Sir John Jellicoe's despatch on the Battle of Jutland were spoken of as first battle squadron, second battle squadron, fourth battle squadron, fifth battle squadron. Next in importance come cruiser squadrons and following are light cruiser squadrons. A battle squadron consists of eight battleships under the command of a vice-admiral, with a rear-admiral as second in command. In one ship is the vice-admiral and in another the rear-admiral, and this organisation is practically maintained throughout. A cruiser squadron should nominally consist of four ships, but this number is varied according to practical requirements. Rear-Admiral Craddock's cruiser squadron at the Battle of Coronel was made up of three types of ship. The *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* were armoured cruisers, the *Glasgow* a light cruiser, and the *Otranto* an auxiliary cruiser. One is tempted to linger over this chapter, but the succeeding portions of the book are even more fascinating. If we select one it is at random, as the author has managed to sustain a very fine standard of excellence throughout the book; but there are certain portions of the Navy which engage attention very much just now, and these are torpedo boats, the torpedo boat destroyers and submarines. The first mentioned is out of date, but the destroyer is at the zenith of its power, and the submarine has been developing at a fast and furious rate during the progress of the war. The Germans, as well as ourselves, have recognised the importance of the destroyer, and the only difference between the two is that the latest British types carry heavier guns than the Germans. The idea is that the destroyer may be able to break through and dash up to the enemy battleships to torpedo them at short range. At the Battle of Jutland the manœuvre was used by both sides, but with inconsiderable success.

The first instance was during the action between the battle-cruiser squadrons in the early stages of the engagement. Both sides simultaneously flung destroyer flotillas at the opposing heavy ships, with the result that the light craft met midway, fought each other, and although the German attack was driven off, the encounter broke up the formation of our flotillas; and their attack on the German battle-cruisers "was rendered less effective."

The destroyer has played a great part in keeping down the submarines, vessels which will probably play a still greater part in the future.

The earliest submarines were mere shells into which engines had been fitted, while the latest type is as much sub-divided as an Atlantic liner. Improvements of every possible kind have been introduced. For example, they used to carry their own water and, as a rule, as much as they would want to use to drink and for a wash twice a day, which must have added considerably to the weight. Now the difficulty is got over by the installation of a small distilling plant which can supply a reasonable amount of water for the dirty, thirsty men's needs in the course of twenty-four hours.

Mr. Ferraby describes an improvement by M. Olivier Guilhéneuc. It may be interesting to quote it:

It is, if I may be thoroughly untechnical, a sort of haybox-cookery idea. The water-tube boiler is surrounded by material which accumulates and stores up heat. On the surface the vessel is driven by steam generated by fire, petro' gas flame furnaces being used, and when the submarine dives those flames are shut off, but the heat accumulated round the tubes continues indefinitely to generate more steam.

Mr. Ferraby discusses in a very interesting manner the possibilities of submersible ships. He explains the advantages of the gun over the torpedo as a submarine weapon. The first is accuracy of aim, and the second speed. A shell from a 3in. gun will reach a target a mile away in 2.38sec., while a torpedo will take 79.2sec. to cover the same distance. Also, your 3in. gun is able to discharge thirty shells during the time it would take one torpedo to arrive at its target.

The defence against this torpedo is still a difficult problem. Mr. Ferraby says:

I am inclined to believe that M. Raymond Lestonnat, the French naval writer, is on the track of a very possible solution of the problem when he reminds us that, about twenty-five years ago, there was a cross-Channel steamer built with two separate hulls connected above water by decks. She was called the *Calai-Douvres*, and was built in that special form not for safety, but to overcome the rolling which was so uncomfortable in the old-time Channel steamers. The big surface fighting ship of the future may possibly develop into a series of hulls joined by armoured decks above water, the idea being that, although one of the hulls might be damaged by under-water explosion, the stability of the whole ship would not be thereby destroyed.

We would like to go over the chapters on guns and shells and torpedoes and, in particular, the disquisition on auxiliaries. He says that when the general public knows exactly what has been done by these vessels they will receive a thrill. He has a very pleasant dissertation about the names of them which, of course, were originally chosen by fishermen.

On mine-layers and mine-sweepers he is equally interesting, and we are sure that every intelligent reader will agree with our plea that this book ought to be in every library—public and private—and read in every school.

LITERARY NOTES

MR. W. H. DAVIES has not yet received the full recognition that as a poet he deserves. At the beginning of his career too much was made, both by himself and his admirers, of his life as a tramp. This was made a glory, whereas it was a drawback, though I would qualify this by adding a drawback on balance. It has been good for him to get quit of conventional ideals and methods of thought, but the finest nature could not go through an experience similar to his perfectly unstained. The wonder is that it has left so much freshness of heart and mind. Whatever his life, it has enabled him to write well. His *Collected Poems* (A. C. Fifield) ought to be in the possession of everyone who loves good poetry. The book contains one hundred and eleven "golden numbers" sifted from the nine volumes of verse that had previously been published by Mr. Davies.

Whoever chose them has done so with taste and discernment. This little volume established his right to a permanent place in English literature. It shows, too, that the author belongs to no schools, creeds or tea-parties of the moment. He will not be claimed as brother by any of the Symbolists, Futurists, Cubists, or what not, such as play fantastic tricks before the doors of the poetry bookshop. They are like the geniuses who from time to time claim to have discerned a new opening in the game of chess. If they are wise, they learn in time that although there is infinite room for the development of new characters in play, it is next to impossible to improve openings that have been brought to their present stage by more than a thousand years of study. In verse Mr. Davies has not chased this will-o'-the-wisp. Yet he has achieved a style not incomparable with that of certain masters.

He is original in the sense of being absolutely true to himself, but his mind often reminds one of Herrick. The seventeenth century parson and the twentieth century tramp resemble each other in a certain childlike wonder and naïveté. "Except ye become as little children ye shall in nowise enter" is as true of art as of any other heaven. How dear to both of them are the trifles that are never trifling! What quaint, unexpected conceits fall naturally from their lips! With what boylike frankness do their moods alter from gay to sad! The invocation that stands first in this volume would not have been out of place in *Golden Numbers*:

"My mind has thunderstorms,
That brood for heavy hours;
Until they rain me words,
My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

"Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
And brood your heavy hours;
For when you rain me words,
My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds."

But Mr. Davies is far more of an outcast from society. Probably he would never have been a tramp but for his instinctive revolt from the harness and bridle of daily work. He is never more absolutely himself than when declaiming against the ceaseless pursuit of wealth that becomes a tyranny ending in death physical and spiritual. I will give two quotations to illustrate a note that rises uppermost again and again in his poems. One is the poem which gave a title to the volume called "Songs of Joy," the

songs being "such as a linnet sings in the wood." But who would sing that song must

"Strive not for gold, for greedy fools
Measure themselves by poor men never;
Their standard still being richer men,
Makes them poor ever.

"Train up thy mind to feel content,
What matters then how low thy store?
What we enjoy, and not possess,
Makes rich or poor."

The second is from a poem that incidentally shows that if there is much of the spirit of Herrick in him, he also has a kinship with William Blake. It is called "The Two Children."

"Ah, little boy! I see
You have a wooden spade.
Into this sand you dig
So deep—for what?' I said.
'There's more rich gold,' said he,
'Down under where I stand,
Than twenty elephants
Could move across the land.'

"Ah, little girl with wool!—
What are you making now?'
'Some stockings for a bird,
To keep his legs from snow.'
And there those children are,
So happy, small, and proud:
The boy that digs his grave,
The girl that knits her shroud."

In his eyes the men who concentrate all their energies on the ignoble pursuit of money-making are the real fools and blind. They have

"No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like stars at night."

For him the solace of life is found in Nature. His chief delight is flowers that shine and winged things that fly.

Not always does he hit the bullseye. The charm butterflies possess for him has not prevented his writing:

"When butterflies will make side-leaps,
As though escaped from Nature's hand
Ere perfect quite; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps;"

Here is something badly done which is done perfectly by Miss Butchart's first white butterfly which "floating past, never comes again." Those "side-leaps" form a descent into prose. But the lapse is generously atoned for in "The Example," a little poem Blake himself might have been proud to write:

"Here's an example from
A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

"Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower."

But the finest bit of Nature and the most perfect poem in the volume is "Early Morn," in which the purity and sunshine of dawn are rendered with a skill seldom, if ever, exalted.

"When I did wake this morn from sleep,
It seemed I heard birds in a dream;
Then I arose to take the air—
The lovely air that made birds scream;
Just as a green hill launched the ship
Of gold, to take its first clear dip.

"And it began its journey then,
As I came forth to the air;
The timid Stars had vanished quite,
The Moon was dying with a stare;
Horses, and kine, and sheep were seen
As still as pictures, in fields green.

"It seemed as though I had surprised
And trespassed in a golden world
That should have passed while men still slept!
The joyful birds, the ship of gold,
The horses, kine and sheep did seem
As they would vanish for a dream."

Mr. Davies is invariably most himself in the little unpremeditated lay. He is never so good in a long piece. Anywhere he is capable of such enormities as making "saw" rhyme with "war," as in "Child Lovers," a very artificial, ill thought piece. In taste he is anything but impeccable, but take him in his best and most characteristic poems and he must delight

every lover of poetry. His style is free from affection or pose. He writes in the tongue of Milton and Shakespeare, and his clearness and brevity do not prevent him from introducing touches of his own humour. P.

Tales of the Great War. by Sir Henry Newbolt. (Longmans, Green, 6s. net.)

YPRES, Coronel, the Retreat from Mons, Jutland—their stories have been told by many skilled pens, but never with greater simplicity or effectiveness than Sir Henry Newbolt has employed in this volume. His introduction is a letter to a boy as to a partner, "I have written this book and you are going to read it—and we must play up to each other . . . I have told you here of good work and courage and endurance, such as deserve all the loudest adjectives that I could have shouted at you, but I have not shouted . . . it is you, not I, that must make the stories come alive. . . . Feeling, then, is your part; truth is mine." Which is written with so pretty a modesty that it may be needful to say that the author's straightforward narratives have just that rich feeling which sincerity brings to the statement of gallant truth. "The Adventures of a Subaltern" carry us from the outbreak of war until a day in April, 1915, when the letters which tell the story were suspended by a journey in a hospital train. It takes no special acumen to see that these adventures warmed the author's just pride as well as his delight in fine service stubbornly rendered against great odds. "The Story of a General" shows us once again the debt we owe to General Smith-Dorrien for his stalwart leadership in the Retreat from Mons. It was one of the great moments in the war when Smith-Dorrien telephoned to Sir Henry Wilson, then Assistant Chief of Staff, that he must make a stand and fight. Sir John French's orders were to retire and keep on retiring, but Smith-Dorrien's answer was "My one chance is to fight, and I am going to do it." It was against all odds and orders, this decision taken in the lonely night amid all the confusion and strain of the "contemptibles'" retreat, but no one can estimate what it meant to Great Britain, and we do well to remember our gratitude to the man who made the decision.

The naval stories are told with the same grasp of essential things. We shall never know exactly what was in Cradock's mind when he met von Spee at Coronel, but Sir Henry shows us that he did his best with the material at his command, and the Falkland Islands sequel cleared the account. If there is a better war book than this for the patriotic boy to read, we have not yet met it.

Greenmantle, by John Buchan. (Hodder and Stoughton, 6s.)

I HAVE never read a book by Mr. Buchan before, but having finished the last page of *Greenmantle* I wish it were possible to forget all about it and start straightway at the first again; and this, mind you, while acknowledging that the whole thing is, frankly, wildly impossible, a blend of bluff and blarney, of cinematographic escapes and pursuits, of melodramatic interviews and astounding situations, of vice defeated by virtue, and of the triumph of such a super-secret service as no State yet possessed. Yet, so convincing is the style, that this recital of dare-devilry which, starting in Whitehall, ends with the resistless rush of Cossack troops into Erzerum carries one along not only willing, but breathlessly eager for the dénouement. One asks one's self wherein lies the peculiar charm of Mr. Buchan's work. Of course, the subject is all in his favour. To the ordinary civilian all things anti-Ally are now hidden behind a veil. We know that life in Central Europe must be going on very much as it is in England, but our imagination is so permeated with the idea of German militarism that even the Kaiser's wild bombast about arming every cat and dog has lost some of its absurdity. It is quite possible for some British minds to conceive an anti-British dachshund. No veil exists for Mr. Buchan, however. He shows us Berlin gaily lighted, bustling, unperturbed; in the villages old men, women and children scarcely cognisant of the objects of the war; barges laden with munitions for the Turkish army travelling down the Danube manned by yellow-haired, deep water sailors from the Frisian Islands; and one of the cleverest things in the book is the account of how the teller of the tale, Major Hannay, having become engineer on one of these same barges, loses his temper at being offered a bribe by a Turkish official. He has perforce made himself responsible for the delivery of the cargo at Rustchuk, and although he knows that it is destined for use against our own troops in Gallipoli, his English ego drives him, against all reason and knowledge, to play the straight game by his unsuspecting skipper. But the success of the book lies deeper than this sort of thing. It lies, I think, in the writer's accurate conception of the spirit of adventure. Adventurousness does not consist wholly of bravery. Many a brave man has no spice of adventure in him. Though bravery and quick wits are essential, it consists far more of a remarkable power of detachment. For the true adventurer there was no yesterday, there is no to-morrow, only a capacity for adapting his individuality to each isolated hour. To cold reason the adventurer must always appear a more or less magnificent fool. Very thoroughly has Mr. Buchan grasped this fact. One can almost see his adventurers kicking themselves for fools, yet persisting in their folly. I for one am very grateful to him that they do, for the memory of their fearsome escapades will last long after peace has fallen on the scene of them again. *Greenmantle* ends amid the roar of guns and the smoke of a beleaguered city, and so perhaps one may be permitted with some appropriateness to call it a thundering good story.

Salt and Savour, by Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick. (Methuen, 5s.)

IN the days when the war first became a reality to us, jarring our lives, forcing itself upon realisation, there were many of us who had painfully to adjust ideas—from "Hermann and Dorothea" to "The First Violin," the world of books teemed with them—of an old-fashioned Germany. It was a land of poetry and music and candle-lit Christmas trees whose people were full of the love of learning and the love of God only humorously tempered with the love of *Delikatessen*, and we found it difficult to believe that such a nation has produced the murderers of Louvain. Those of us who knew our Germany in the years immediately preceding the war had, no doubt,

our warnings—boastings of the young men of our acquaintance, glimpses of a wonderful martial machine—but much in individuals that was simple, attractive and even disarmingly stupid served to discount them. Mrs. Sidgwick tells the story of a girl of German blood, but English by adoption and in intellect, who marries a German officer and remains in Berlin and Brussels until some months after the declaration of war. It seems, insufficient reason as it is, to have been that vision of a gracious old-fashioned Germany which persuaded Brenda Müller into marriage with her *Hau'mann*, for, apart from his military glitter, he was a most unpleasant person, and much of Mrs. Sidgwick's energy has been expended in enlightening those who may still share her heroine's impression. It seems to us that it would have been cleverer to have allowed the *Hau'mann* a few virtues, but it must be conceded that he is not an unfair picture of the worst type of man produced by the nation which excels in that respect. On the whole Mrs. Sidgwick gives a just picture of the bad side of German life as it was before the war and may never be again, of "the puzzling blend of information and ignorance that makes the average German right in his facts and wrong in his judgments"

and of the "national conceit and want of national dignity." *Salt and Savour* is necessarily, in spite of its happy ending, a harrowing book, but one which should be good for public opinion. We want no "Hymns of Hate," but we must have resolution unshakable. We have but one wish—and that for the well nigh impossible—that Mrs. Sidgwick could have published her book at least five years earlier.

Beautiful Buildings in France and Belgium, with notes by C. Harrison Townsend. (Fisher Unwin, ros. 6d. net.)

NO picture book calls for a very critical eye, and this one not at all, for the sources of the illustrations are unusually varied and interesting. The publisher has chosen to draw on the artists of past generations, and it is pleasant to see good reproductions of David Roberts, T. S. Boys, Prout, Coney and others, some of them in colour. Thanks to German ways, some of the subjects have taken their place alongside Babylon and Nineveh. Others of them may yet succumb to Teutonic ideas of necessity, so this record is timely. Mr. Harrison Townsend's notes are brief and to the point.

CORRESPONDENCE

MORE ABOUT POVERTY BOTTOM

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I see you keep pegging away at your patriotic task of stimulating increased production, and I am gratified to think that Poverty Bottom has been able to furnish you with some powder and shot. I remember when you saw the place in the end of July you thought the mangold crop had possibilities. Last week I had five sample areas lifted and weighed, and find that on the best part of the field the crop actually weighs 59 tons per acre, with an average over all of 45 tons. Many say it is the biggest crop they have ever seen. It is certainly a remarkable result on land as poor as any to be found on the chalk formation. The manuring was a very ordinary one, some 12 tons of farmyard manure spread on the stubble in the course of the winter, 5cwt. per acre basic slag in February, and 1cwt. sulphate of ammonia and 2cwt. salt at time of sowing. The farmyard manure was partly made by fattening steers getting cake, but chiefly by store stock getting only roots, straw and meadow hay. But the hay had been grown with slag and was full of clover, so that the nitrogen gathered from the air on the grass land found its way to the mangolds through the undigested food residues and the liquid excreta. Largely, no doubt, as a result of what you published in *COUNTRY LIFE* I have been brought into touch with men who hold land on the downs in various parts of the country, and many of them are adopting the methods that have proved successful in Sussex.—W. SOMERVILLE.

SURREY AS AN ORCHID COUNTY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with great interest a letter from Mr. L. Gilbert Payne on the subject of orchids found in a woody dell in Surrey. I have a small place in South Hants; within 200 yards of the house is a little wood, where, during the course of last summer, I found the bee, the fly, the butterfly, the early purple, the spotted and the bird's-nest orchis, the twayblade and the great white helleborine. I may add I only took up wild flower hunting seriously last May, as previously I had never lived in any neighbourhood remarkable for its wild flowers. I shall endeavour to commence my researches again early next year and have every hope of finding more treasures. I noticed several orchid-like plants with spotted leaves and large clusters of seed heads, but my knowledge was not sufficient to hazard a guess as to what they had been. They may yield something interesting next year. I keep the wood as private as possible, but before I bought it, not many months ago, it had been sadly neglected, and the village folk and children seem to consider it as their property; and it goes to my heart to see these beautiful flowers lying about ruthlessly torn up and thrown away, often with their roots attached.—ELEANOR PEEL.

WOOD ASHES AS MANURE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Mr. Thomas Ratcliffe reminds us of what ought to be universally known, viz., that wood ashes are a valuable manure for root crops. But he does not add what is not so commonly known, viz., that, unless the ash is protected from rain, the first wet day will wash nearly all the value out of it. The chief fertilising ingredient in wood ashes is potash, and potassium carbonate being readily soluble in water, must be kept dry till it is applied to the soil. It may be noted that small brush and foliage is far richer in potash than is large timber. Bracken, which is becoming a serious scourge on hill pastures in the North, contains much potash. I am informed that, if cut at midsummer or in July, the ash returns 25 per cent. of potash, whereas if the fern is left standing till August the proportion falls to 5 per cent. Here, I submit, is a promising field for experiment. If we could rid our pastures of bracken and, at the same time, harvest a good supply of potash, we should be doing ourselves double service. Hitherto, I believe, British glass-blowers, soap-boilers and farmers have relied for supplies of potash on the potassiferous minerals of Stassfurt in Germany. That source is now closed; the deposits in the Carpathian Mountains are not yet opened up. It would be well if we could produce this indispensable material at home. I believe there is already some revival of kelp-burning in the West Highlands and in Ireland.—HERBERT MAXWELL.

TO RESTORE THE TILTH TO WET CLAY LAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the issue of November 18th I see in your "Country Notes" a remark about the destruction of the tilth of clay soil by ploughing it when wet.

Here is a quotation on the subject from "The Practice of Reclamation for English Waste," now in course of preparation: "The uncultivated heavy clay exists in its deflocculated state and therefore the tilth is very bad. . . . When clay soil is very wet it ought not to be worked, because this produces deflocculation and destroys the tilth. Deflocculation of the clay is the greatest obstacle to its economic cultivation. The soil is no longer sufficiently aerated, often it remains unduly wet, stopping growth early in autumn and making the start of vegetation late in spring, while during summer it dries excessively and cracks, so that the crops have to grow under most unfavourable conditions, while at any time the soil is difficult to work. The destruction of the flocculation of clay soil must carefully be avoided, but when it exists or when it has been produced, remedies must be applied. Among these remedies are dressings of gas lime, ground limestone or ground chalk. When this carbonate of lime is dissolved by water carrying carbonic anhydride, it produces flocculation. This is the most energetic flocculator. Gypsum also would produce a good effect. An application of humus in the form of green manure or farmyard manure will assist flocculation. Acids in general, and therefore superphosphate, which contains gypsum as well, are favourable, while sulphate of ammonia is known to be a flocculator. Soot, which contains sulphate of ammonia, although less energetic, is to be recommended. On the other hand, alkalis in general—hydroxides and carbonates—as well as the soluble alkaline salts, are deflocculators. No common salt should be used, and potash salts must be withheld until flocculation is restored, neither must nitrate of soda be applied." Although under ordinary circumstances sowing of autumn wheat is to be recommended in preference to spring sowing, it might be better in such a season as the present to apply means of restoring flocculation if the land is suffering from being worked while begin too wet instead of sowing now.—H. VENDELMANS.

SHOT, OF COURSE!

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—We enclose you an account of the shooting of a rare bird which has been entrusted to us to mount. We thought it might be of interest to some of your readers who take notes of this sort of thing. Permission has been granted by the owners for publication. "Fine male bittern shot on November 9th, 1916, by Mr. Enoch Kitching in the Otterington Willow Garth, near Northallerton."—E. ALLEN AND CO.

[It is astonishing that the perpetrator of such an outrage as that of shooting a bittern should desire the fact to be published. The booming of this bird used to be a familiar sound in rural England, but it was driven away by drainage. Of recent years its nest has again been found, and the bird received a hearty welcome home again, but not from Mr. Kitching, who seems proud of having shot one.—ED.]

A WASP'S METHODS OF WARFARE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In answer to Lord Wynford's letter about "Wasps' Method of Warfare," I do not think it was fury over the Boche crumps, as I have seen them catch flies on our windows and tear off their wings and head and leave them lying on the floor while they flew away with the bodies.—ELEANOR SHIFFNER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—With regard to the habits of the wasp to which Lord Wynford refers in the issue of the 4th inst., it was probably "parental anxiety" that provoked the attack on the fly and its subsequent dismemberment, the facts being as follows: Wasps rear their larvæ on fresh animal food, the "meat" being reduced to a pulp and then given to each grub separately. It is late for grubs now, but I have collected larvæ of wasps all the year round. The parent wasp is really a clever surgeon, and also possesses a good knowledge of the muscular parts of flies, which parts alone are of use to the brood. When a fly is caught it is usually dismembered as soon as captured. The wings, consisting chiefly of cuticle, are cut off and discarded. The legs are also poor in nourishment, so they are removed. The head, too, is of no value, and, unless it is cut off previously by a snap of the mandibles of the wasp, is also discarded. At this stage the parent or nurse wasp usually proceeds home; but if the body of the victim is too large, the abdomen may

be sacrificed, though it is usually emptied of its contents before being cast away. Really, the thorax, which is packed with muscles, the lean meat desired of the larvæ, is often the only part carried to the nest. On the way the adult wasp partly reduces the flesh to a pulp, which is fed to the young when sufficiently finely ground. The killing of the fly itself is not accomplished with any degree of skill. It is simply stung and crushed. But the rapidity with which dismemberment is accomplished and the instinct that discards useless parts (and also parts that would offer great resistance in a wind) excite admiration. Hornets attack and despatch hive bees in the same way.—ANNIE PORTER.

A TAME IRISH FOX.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph of a fox which I think might be interesting enough to put in your paper. The fox is the property of Mr. R. Grove-

Annesley of Annesgrove, County Cork. He was taken when a cub from a batch which were being reared for hunting, and after a few months became quite tame. He is kept on a chain which runs along a wire, thus enabling him to run up and down the path at the end of which his kennel stands. He has been set free several times, but shows no inclination to run away. His food consists chiefly of rabbits, which he always buries as soon as he has eaten enough; but



RECONCILED TO CAPTIVITY.

he will eat gooseberries by the hundred, which I should think is rather uncommon for a fox. I should like to know whether any of your readers have heard of a similar case of a fox's tameness.—R. J. LONGFIELD.

RECLAIMING THE WASTE AND TRANSPORT FACILITIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The latest addition to the COUNTRY LIFE Library proves the urgency and profitableness of land reclamation. It necessarily leaves many important aspects of the question, such as cheaper transport, to be dealt with separately. Mr. Anderson Graham points out that the 200 tons of basic slag required for Poverty Bottom were brought in a sloop from Middlesbrough, and that reclaimers in Holland actually constructed a canal as part of their work. In the ordinary case in this country we must depend on the existing railways. Fortunately, these so intersect the country as to meet the needs of the land to be first dealt with.

The root difficulty is that our methods of charging for the use of railways, differing in this from that of our own Colonies and other countries, tends to drive trade and population into large towns and their neighbourhoods, and to impoverish the outlying parts of the country. To put it shortly, our railways stick by the system of charges which prevailed in the old coaching days before Rowland Hill introduced the penny postage. That reform was not so much a boon to the public as a great business reform, yielding profits of millions a year to the country. If our railways studied what traffic really paid them, they would quickly alter their rating classifications and charge according to the true profit to the company and not to distance alone. They would aim at developing population and trade in the districts where they can increase their trade many times without any further capital or on cost expenditure. In

large towns the railways are working up to their capacity, and as trade and population increase the railway companies have to extend their lines, stations and sidings at enormous cost. The return from this expenditure is small, often nil. Goods are taken a short run to or from the docks at a low rate, and the passengers are mostly for a short distance only.

Land reclamation means increased population and passenger traffic and greater goods traffic for the railway in seeds and manures and feeding stuffs and fuel inwards, and in farm produce of every kind outwards. The railway is there, and the trains are running, but not occupied to more than 25 per cent. of their capacity. The additional traffic is thus profitable to such a greater extent than the existing traffic that the railway companies will find it worth their while to lower their rates. Manures and feeding stuffs should go as cheaply as coal, as these secure an increased return traffic. They would also find reduced through rates for general produce develop new traffic in the same way as do reduced milk rates on many Northern lines. The system which has worked wonders in spreading the population in Canada and the United States, as well as in Belgium and Holland should now get a trial in this country.

If the railway directors are not prepared to run their lines so as to develop the country and make money for their shareholders, as has been done by companies in North and South America, we may take it that nationalisation is inevitable. If they would consider how little profit they make out of an addition of 50,000 to the population of London, or one of our great cities, compared to what they make from an additional 1,000 people at a rural station fifty or seventy miles from a large town, they would find it to be in the interest of their shareholders to give the best terms to the man furthest out in the country. They would find he is the best paying customer because he is the furthest away and makes the largest use of their line. They would then cease to penalise him for his enterprise, and would alter their rates accordingly.—D. JOHNSTONE.

SEAL PICTURES FROM IRELAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I send you a picture of a young seal born this year in a cave at



A NEAR VIEW OF THE BABY SEAL.

Taken in the cave.

Lambay. In the other picture you can see the heads of the father and mother seals swimming in the rough sea outside the cave.—CALYPSO.



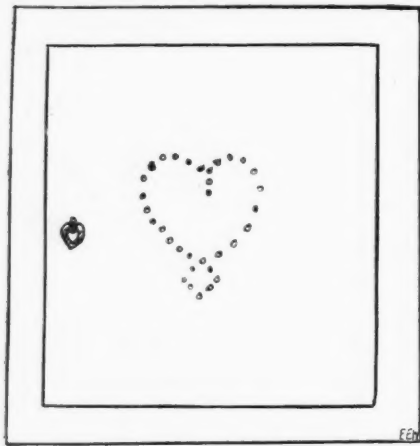
SUNK ISLAND BAY FROM THE CAVE.

The old cal can be seen in the water.

A CURIOUS COUNTRY CUSTOM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The other day I was visiting an old farmhouse in North Wales, and among other quaint and curious things in the living-room I observed an old oak cupboard sunk into the wall. Upon the door of this cupboard a heart was marked consisting of small holes bored through the wood. At the base of the heart were more holes, forming a kind of diamond shape.



THE BETROTHAL HEART.

I asked the good lady of the house the origin of the heart, as I had never before seen that form of decoration upon a cupboard door. I was then told that some time ago at a betrothal party each guest was asked to bore a hole in the cupboard door, and according to the number of holes made so there were guests. The few holes made below the heart were to represent heart's blood. These were made some time afterwards, and show that one of the betrothed pair died before marriage. I wonder if any other readers of COUNTRY LIFE have seen or heard of such a thing before, or if it is a Welsh custom alone. I enclose a small drawing of the oak cupboard and heart.—ETHEL WALMSLEY.

THE SEA BUCKTHORN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There appears to be a hidden meaning in the first verse of Joy Bunting's delightful poem, "To the Grey Sea-Thorn of the East Coast," in your issue of October 21st, page 480. It runs:

"Sturdy grey thorn upon the sandy dunes,
Whose burnished berries shimmer in the sun,
Let us each imitate thy fortitude,
Keeping a cheery heart and fearing none."

The very fact that the sea buckthorn remains covered with its translucent orange-coloured berries long after the berries of other trees and shrubs have been devoured by birds leads one to think that there is more truth in the last two lines of the above verse than at first meets the eye. It is possible that the berries of this native shrub, of which I enclose photographs, are poisonous, and this may explain why the berries, "Keeping a cheery heart and fearing none," remain untouched by birds even in a hard winter. This recalls an amusing reference in Rousseau's "Réveries VII Promenade," in which the author, after eating a number of berries of the sea buckthorn, which he found "very pleasant," was warned that they were poisonous. "Nevertheless," he says, "I felt as I feel now, that every natural production that is pleasant to the taste cannot be harmful unless, perhaps, through excess. I confess, however, that I kept a watch on myself for the rest of the day, but, beyond a certain uneasiness, I felt no ill effects. I supped very well, slept better, and rose in the morning in perfect health, having swallowed the evening before some fifteen or twenty of the berries of this terrible Hippophaë, a small quantity of which is poisonous, as they told me at Grenoble the next day." Granting that Rousseau found the berries "very pleasant"—which, by the way, is difficult to understand; to the present writer they taste like decayed apples—smell—is it really true "that every natural production that is pleasant to the taste cannot be harmful unless, perhaps, through excess"?—C. Q.



THE BEAUTIFUL BUT INEDIBLE BERRIES OF THE SEA BUCKTHORN.

THE LATE MR. OGILVY FAIRLIE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The notice of the late Mr. Ogilvy Fairlie by Mr. J. S. Low, which appeared in your issue of November 11th, is an excellent memorial to a very fine old fellow. But Mr. Low makes two mistakes in it. First, Mr. Fairlie's brother (there were four of them) was called "Wilfred" and not "Walter"; and, secondly, the match he refers to as played in 1856 must have been years later. Mr. Leslie Balfour in 1856 was two years old, and Mr. Alen Stuart much about the same.—A CONSTANT READER.

A PLUCKY ADDER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a snapshot of a group of my pupils holding up a dead adder for close inspection. This adder gave the boys a most exciting quarter of an hour. When first seen it darted underneath a huge rock, but when the boys pulled the rock away, thereby destroying the snake's retreat, it became furious, and delighted the boys by springing its own length at each of them in turn. At length the adder was dealt a fatal blow with a thin bracken stalk, and great interest was displayed in the poison fangs and forked tongue.



EXAMINING THEIR DEAD ENEMY.

My pupils meet with many adders each summer, but I have not seen one show such courage before.—RUFUS H. MALLINSON.

THE CULTIVATION OF WHEAT AND POTATOES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A point in connection with the somewhat unfavourable crops of wheat and potatoes experienced this year is worthy of attention. If reference be made to the *Time* crop reports, it will be found that it is the districts in which these crops are principally grown which show a lower average than usual, and that other districts in which these crops are only grown on a limited area come out well. The season which has suited one district has been unfavourable for the other. The deduction is obvious. As a matter of national policy our staple crops should be widely distributed even though certain districts may on an average produce special crops more economically than other localities. It is curious that last spring public attention was not called to the need of increasing the acreage under potatoes, which can be grown almost as well in a garden or small holding as by the specialist, and the cultivation of which can be easily managed by women. The value of having factories equipped for the distillation of potatoes is apparent. A wider market would be thereby provided, giving confidence to the producer and at the same time guarding the consumer against the extreme consequences of a serious crop failure.—RALPH T. HINCKES.